

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

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THE
CANTERBURY TALES
OF
CHAUCER.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
AN ESSAY ON HIS LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION,
AND AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, TOGETHER WITH
NOTES AND A GLOSSARY

BY
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With Memoir and Critical Dissertation,

BY THE
REV GEORGE GILFILLAN

IN THREE VOLS.

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THE LIFE OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

GEOFFREY, GEFREY, or JEFFREY CHAUCER, the Father of English Poetry, and, with the exceptions of Shakspeare and Milton, perhaps the greatest name as yet inscribed on its roll, was born in London, in the year 1328. We learn the former fact from his "Testament of Love," a prose production of his, where he speaks of himself as a Londoner, and of London as the place of his "kindly engendrure," and the second from the inscription on his tombstone, which intimates that he died in 1400, at the age of seventy-two. Others have maintained that he was born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. But surely we may lay it down as an axiom that a man seldom is mistaken about the place of his own birth, unless, indeed, we may suppose, as one of his editors asserts, that he lived till 1410, and had perhaps fallen into dotage! The year in which he was born was the second of the reign of Edward III., and he appeared on the stage of time four years after the birth of his great contemporary, John Wicliffe. It has been truly remarked, in reference to the obscurity which hangs around all the history of Chaucer, that "considering the figure he made in the world during his lifetime, not only in a literary, but also in a political point of view, and the rank and station he had held in society, it seems perfectly astonishing, in this biographic age, that so few particulars of his personal history should have been handed down to us, that even the date and place of his birth should have no positive record." Well does this writer call the present a biographic age. Memoirs are now written of almost everybody, either by others

on by themselves, and there is hardly a scribble so small but has at any rate materials for his future life lying beside him in formidable quantity. What a contrast in this point between our period and that of this great old poet, of whom we know so little, and that little very uncertainly! It has been alternately conjectured and dogmatically maintained that he was the son of an illustrious knight—of a London merchant—of a country gentleman—and of a common vintner or tavern-keeper. Leland says he was *nobili loco natus*, but Speght, an early biographer of his, adduces his arms to shew that he was not descended from any great house, nay, maintains that his father, a tavern-keeper, left his property, when he died in 1348, to the church of St Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. Stowe adds confirmation to this statement, saying that "Richard Chaucei, vintner, gave to that church his tenement and *tavern*, with the appurtenance, in the Royal Streeete, the corner of Henion Lane, and was buried there in 1348." There is no proof, however, that Richard was the father of our poet. Some have alleged the meaning of his name in French—*Chaucier*, a shoemaker—as an evidence of his low origin, but the occurrence of the name Chaucei in several records, from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Edward I, seems to prove the contrary. The circumstance that he was a Londoner, to which he himself testifies twice in his "Testament of Love," proves nothing in the question, since, in his age, the city was the residence not only of the trading classes, but of the nobility, and often of the court. It is more probable, however, from the fact that, after his connexion with the royal household, he was called by the honourable titles of *Valetus noster* (our Yeoman), and *Scutifer noster* (our Esquire)—titles which were then never conferred upon individuals of plebeian family—that he was of "gentle blood," and a respectable family.

Some will have it that he attended both the universities of Cambridge and Oxford—a practice then not uncommon. That he studied at the former is evident from his poem, "The Court of Love," written when he was eighteen, and where he says—

"Philogenet I called am, far and near,
Of Cambridge clerk"

It may be gathered, too, from the familiarity he discovers with

the scenery around Cambridge, in "The Canterbury Tales," as where he says—

"At Tiompington, not far from Cantabridge,
There go'th a brook, and over that a bridge,
Upon the whiche brook there stood a mill"

For his residence in Oxford there is no proof, save the fact that his contemporaries, Gower, Strode, and Occleve, studied at Merton Hall in that university, and a floating tradition, given by Wood, that when "Wickliffe was guardian or warden of Canterbury College, he had to his pupil the famous poet, Jeffrey Chaucei, (father of Thomas Chaucei, of Ewelme, in Oxfordshire, Esq,) who, following the footsteps of his master, reflected much upon the corruptions of the cleigy" Wickliffe entered Oxford in 1340, but whether he became acquainted with Chaucei there is uncertain. A quarterly reviewer, taking for granted that they were there together, thus pleasantly pictures their supposed intercourse—"In 1348-49, let us picture Wickliffe, a man not more than twenty-five years of age, but with the face of a hard student, and of an earnest, anxious temperament, and Chaucei, a fair-complexioned youth of twenty-one, of genial, all-enjoying disposition, but of modest and diffident manners, a diligent student, too, but more diffuse in his tastes, and with less intensity and strictness of moral feeling than Wickliffe—reading the Scriptures with the literary fervour of a poet, not with the docility of a man of God searching after the truth, regarding the world with that clear, sunny spirit which reflects what it sees, rather than with the severe scrutinising eye of a moral teacher groaning over social wrongs. To Chaucei, Wickliffe, we can suppose, would be a strange, almost mysterious man, whose grave, acute, and powerful mind bespoke him the able, honest, and truly consecrated priest. To Wickliffe, Chaucei would be a flesh-hearted and ingenuous youth, whose somewhat quaint and original remarks, as well as the reputed extent of his acquirements, would awaken a stronger feeling of interest than might be thought at all times due to a mere writer of love verses."

Whether he studied at two universities or not, he certainly bore no resemblance to the sapient personage, who, boasting of having done the same, was reminded by another of a calf which

had sucked two cows, and the more he sucked the bigger calf he became. Chaucer profited much by his tuition. His writings prove him an adept in all the learning of the day—its philosophy, poetry, and languages. Leland says he was “*acutus dialecticus, dulcis rhetor, lepidus poeta, gravis philosophus, ingeniosus mathematicus, denique sanctus theologus*,” in other words, a first-rate logician, rhetorician, poet, philosopher, mathematician, and theologian. Some may be disposed to say, incredulously, like Johnson in reference to a similar claim to universal attainments, “Pretty well, Sir, for one man!” But let us remember that that one man in this case was Chaucer. We are often sceptical of such encyclopædic pretensions, and disposed to say with Emerson, who, when we were speaking of the report that Elihu Burritt was acquainted with fifty languages, replied, “I wish I *knew one*,” but we can believe almost anything of a mind so clear and capacious, so full at once of common-sense, shrewd understanding, fire and fancy, as appertained to the author of “*The Canterbury Tales*.” It is not likely that the age of puberty was reached without some impings of his young muse, in praise of love and beauty. In these he is said to have been encouraged by Gower, but some find grounds for believing that his acquaintance with that poet was of a later date.

After leaving the university, there is a blank for a season in Chaucer’s history, but even as

“Geographers on pathless downs
Place elephants in place of towns,”

so conjecture has been loud where information is silent, and sent him away, as Milton went after him, on a continental tour. In this, according to tradition, he visited France and the Netherlands, and when he returned, in 1355, he commenced, in the Middle Temple, the study of the municipal law—a subject not the most congenial to the temperament of a poet. Indeed, the evidence that he ever attended the Temple is very slender, the story depending on a dateless record, said by Speght to have been seen by one Buckley, where Geoffrey Chaucer, residing in the Inner Temple, was fined “two shillings for beating a Franciscane

files in Fleet St" Leland talks of his frequenting the law colleges after and before his travels in France, but his authority is rather apocryphal, and damaged by his own inconsistencies; and Tytwhitt doubts whether in the earlier part of his life he was in France at all.

It is in the Court that Chaucer at last emerges from obscurity, and becomes a real, visible, intelligible figure on the page of history. He was born and reared in a very stirring and eventful period. Edward III. had in 1329, when only fourteen years of age, been proclaimed king, under a council of regency, while his mother's paramour, Mortimer, possessed the principal power in the state. His pride and oppression were felt so intolerable that in 1331, a formidable confederacy was formed against him, at the head of which was Edward himself, now eighteen years of age. Mortimer was seized and hanged, and the queen was shut up, with a reduced allowance and no authority, in her own house. The young king now bent his eagle eye northward, desiring partly, perhaps, to avenge Bannockburn—which stuck as much in the throats of the English then as Waterloo does in those of the French now—and partly to set aside David Bruce, a minor, and to give the Scottish crown to Baliol. He defeated Douglas the regent, at the famous battle of Halidon Hill, July 1333, and it is hard to say how far he might have pushed his conquest, had not a more glittering prize presented itself to his eye, across the Channel. Edward was induced to aspire to the crown of France, which by the Salique law had devolved to Philip de Valois, cousin-german to the deceased King Charles the First. He founded his claim on the fact that his mother was Charles's sister. War was proclaimed, and Edward soon took the field at the head of 30,000 men, and accompanied by his son, the illustrious Edward the Black Prince, then only fifteen years of age. Nothing decisive occurred till August 25, 1346, when the battle of Cressy was fought. In this the English were completely victorious, 30,000 foot and 1200 horse of the French army being left dead upon the field. Edward, who had knighted his son the previous year, generously left him the principal management of the fight, to "shew that he merited his spurs." It was upon this occasion, that the younger Edward assumed the motto

of *Ich dien* (I serve) used by all succeeding Princes of Wales, and derived, some say, from the crest of the king of Bohemia, whom the Black Prince slew in the battle. In a few years after, a truce having existed for some time between England and France, Edward again invaded the latter country, but was recalled home by tidings as to the predatory doings of the Scots, whose king, David Bruce, had been made prisoner in a battle at Durham by Earl Percy. Meanwhile, the Black Prince had penetrated from Guienne to the heart of France, where he was met by King John, at the head of a force five times more numerous than the English. The result was the battle of Poitiers, September 19, 1356, in which the French were totally and very rapidly routed, and then king taken prisoner. Sixty thousand were scattered almost without a blow, by the valour and discipline of twelve thousand.

We need not further pursue the current of these well-known historical facts. We have alluded to them only to shew in what a remarkable age—an age full of all the elements of romantic gallantry and chivalric adventure—Chaucer flourished. When he appeared in the court of England, it was probably the gayest and noblest in Europe. Tournaments and pageants were the order of almost every day. Processions were got up, in which ladies of the first rank were seen riding on palfreys, and dragging knights captive through the streets in golden chains. Amidst the glittering throng, there appeared many remarkable persons. Edward himself, still in the flower of life, the conqueror of France, the humbler of Scotland, and who had the kings of both countries in prison, his queen, Philippa, a woman who combined the courage of an Amazon with the mildness of a Madonna, who had raised the army which gained the battle of Durham, and had gone over to Calais, to beg from her husband the lives of Eustache de St Pierre and five other citizens, whom Edward, enraged by the length of the siege, had designed to put to death, the children of the blood-royal, eleven in number, seven being princes and four princesses, including the brave Black Prince, at whose name all France grew pale, and John of Gaunt, now a quiet youth of eighteen, but afterwards to become “time-honour’d Lancaster,” the parent of a long family of kings. It

is in the midst of such a splendid concourse, that we first catch a lively glimpse of our poet. He is about thirty years of age, two years older than the Black Prince, he is handsome in figure, with a fair yet colourless complexion, his beard resembles that of a "wheat stalk," and is forked in shape, his hair is rather short and thin for his years, and of a slightly shadowed yellow, his forehead is fair and smooth as a summer's lake, the expression of his countenance is sweet and gentle, although a minute observer may spy in it, at the corner of his mouth, satire lurking in the shape of a curved smile; his manner is reserved and modest, and he has the habit of constantly looking on the ground "as if," says the Host, in the prologue to *Sir Topas*, "he expected to find a hare,"—an attitude not all unlike that worn by the great Poet of the Lakes, whose genius brooded o'er the earth "whence he was taken," under a resistless force and fascination, like a needle attracted to a sunken loadstone. Chaucer became corpulent, and no doubt gray or bald, in his latter days, but his general appearance and his demeanour did not otherwise materially change. His aspect answered—like that of most of our great Anglo-Saxon men of genius, such as Spenser, Bunyan, Scott, Wilson, &c., men who had no *foreign* element in their nature—to the ideal of the Saxon style of manly beauty, which includes yellow or auburn hair, bright eyes, and fair or ruddy complexion.

It seems likely, that Chaucer entered the court originally as king's page, but the first intimation of an authentic kind, as to his position there, is one hinted at a little above. There is a patent recorded in Rymer dated 41 Edward III., by which that king bestows on the poet an annuity of twenty marks, (about £200 of our money,) as *Valetus noster*, "our yeoman," and this was granted when he was thirty-nine years of age. He was afterwards created *Valetus hospitii*, "gentleman of the palace," and also *Scutifer noster*, "our esquire." Ere this date, 1367, he had distinguished himself as a poet, having published before then his "Court of Love," the "Assemblee of Foules," the "Complaint of the Blacke Knyghte," and the translation of the "Roman de la Rose." By and by, the king appointed him Comptroller of the Customs of Wool, giving him, moreover, the strange injunction

that the "said Geffrey write with his own hands, his 10lls, touching the said office, in his own proper person, and not by his substitute." The office may seem uncongenial to a poetic temperament, and yet the facts that Charles Lamb perpended "John Woodville" in the old South Sea House, and Macaulay wrote his "Lays of Ancient Rome" in the War-Office, are not so remarkable as the fact which Tytwhitt affirms, that, occupied in Custom-house accounts, and as it were "buried in woollen," Chaucer composed his "House of Fame."

Long previous to these offices and honours, our poet had been attached to the person of the renowned John of Gaunt, and his connexion with him had, apart from his direct court favour, a considerable share in advancing his fortunes. This young prince, who was ambitious of political influence, and who hated the clergy for their monopoly of power, is supposed to have seen the importance of pressing Chaucer, a genius and a satirist, into his service. Some say that Gaunt, being in love with the Lady Blanche, daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, made the poet his confidant, and that, acting on his suggestion, Chaucer wrote the "Complaint of the Blacke Knight" to aid him in his suit. Whether it was to the "Black Knight," or to his "Minstrel," or to both, we cannot tell, but, certainly, the obdurate fan surrendered, and in 1359, on occasion of the marriage of Gaunt with Lady Blanche, a poem appeared entitled "Chaucer's Dream." In this copy of epithalamic verses, however, another heroine besides Blanche comes into view. This is Philippa Pyckard (or Pickard) Rouet, younger daughter of Sir Payne Rouet, Guenne king-at-arms, a native of Hamnault. She (named probably after Queen Philippa) had, along with her sister Catherine, come to England in the train of that royal personage. At court Chaucer had seen her, and was instantly fascinated. She became the object as well as the inspirer of his "Dream," and occupies the foreground in that ingenious poem. The poet imagines that "he" and "his lady" are brought by the young couple, Gaunt and Blanche, to the parish church, "there to conclude the marriage." The service is "full-ysungen out after the custom and the guise of Holy Church's ordinance." The feast has commenced, a thousand twangling instruments of

music are in the ear of the dreamer, when, alas ! he awakes, and
 “ behold it is a dream ”

“ Then from my bed anon I leapt,
 Weening to have been at the feast,
 But when I woke all was yceased,
 For there n’as lady ne creature,
 Save on the walls old portraiture
 Of horsemen, hawkes, and of hounds,
 And hart-deer all full of wounds,
 Some like bitten, some hurt with shot,
 And as my dream seem’d what was not
 And when I woke and knew the truth,
 An’ ye had seen, of very ruth
 I trow ye would have wept a week ”

To this lady, Chaucer was not married for some years. Her sister, Catherine Swinford, (widow of Sir John Swinford,) became first the mistress, and afterwards the third wife of John of Gaunt. In 1359, Chaucer accompanied Edward III in his expedition to France, an expedition in which, at first, the English king carried all before him, desolating the provinces of Picardy and Champagne, but subsequently underwent some reverses, and was glad to conclude a peace in May 1360. In the course of this campaign, at the siege of Retters, our poet was taken prisoner, and is supposed to have remained in duance for several years. A prison has not unfrequently been a nursery for genius. Sir Walter Scott says, somewhere, that if he were shut up in solitary confinement without books, and with no prospect of speedy release, he would go mad. Many men of genius, however, and brave spirits of various sorts, have found it otherwise. A prison has concentrated their thoughts, and become the “procreant cradle” to their imaginations. The process by which Godwin describes Caleb Williams becoming reconciled to his dungeon, has sometimes been realised in fact. Caleb says—“I tasked the stores of my memory and my powers of invention; I amused myself with recollecting the history of my life. By degrees I quitted my own story, and employed myself in imaginary adventures. I figured to myself every situation in which I could be placed, and conceived the conduct to be observed in each. At length I proceeded to as regular a disposition of my

time as the man in his study who passes from mathematics to poetry, and from poetry to the law of nations, in the different parts of the same day. I went over, by the assistance of memory alone, a considerable part of Euclid during my confinement, and revived, day after day, the series of facts and incidents in some of the most celebrated historians. I became myself a poet, and while I described the sentiments cherished by the view of natural objects, recorded the characters and passions of men, and partook with a burning zeal in the generosity of their determinations, I eluded the squalid solitude of my dungeon, and wandered in idea through all the varieties of human society. While thus employed, I reflected with exultation upon the degree in which man is independent of the smiles and frowns of fortune. I was beyond her reach, for I could fall no lower. To an ordinary eye I might seem destitute and miserable, but in reality I wanted for nothing. My fare was coarse, but I was in health. My dungeon was noisome, but I felt no inconvenience."

This was better than toying with a mouse like Baron Trenck, or exclaiming with Bonnivard in Chillon—

"Of spiders I acquaintance made,
And watch'd them at their sullen trade"

But it was not better than James I. of Scotland, when immured in Windsor Castle, writing, or at least collecting the materials of his "King's Quhan," than Tasso "making to him wings with which to fly" from the hospital of St. Anne, where he was injuriously confined, to the summits of the delectable mountains of poetry, than Sir Walter Raleigh soaring from the Tower to Aaiat, to Lebanon, to the Seven Hills of Rome, while producing his great "History of the World," or than Bunyan dreaming his wondrous Pilgrim's Progress in the damp dungeon at Bedford—his body bound, while his soul was travelling to and back again from that city which hath no need of the sun. The supposed case of Caleb Williams illustrates principally the force of dauntless resolution, blended with contemptuous defiance of the world, the real story of Bunyan displays the power of piety and of faith, as well as of uncontrollable genius.

How Chaucer employed himself in his immurement, we know not, but we are certain that his mind was not idle. He had the

memory of stirring deeds and incidents in the past to cheer him. He had—if not the “key called Promise in his bosom, able to open every lock in Doubting Castle”—the Philosopher’s Stone of genius in his brain, able to convert his chains into gold and his prison into a palace. Above all, he had a pure and hopeful love in his heart, a beautiful ideal, which, like the apparition of Lady Jane Beaufort to James I, made a sunshine in his shady place, and every night on his pillow renewed “Chaucer’s Dream.” In the year 1365 or 1366 we find him in England, married to his own Philippa. On the 12th of September 1366, there is an entry of a pension of ten marks for life, granted by the king to “Philippa Chaucer as a lady in the king’s household,” and this, with the twenty marks mentioned above as given to Chaucer himself in 1367, would amount to more than £300, for that age a very comfortable income for a newly married couple. He might now be considered settled in life—he had reached the borders of middle age, he had the object of a long attachment in his bosom, his happiness in short, if not his fame, had culminated, and now therefore was the time for doing justice to his genius. And to the four years succeeding this, the composition of his “Troilus and Cresseide,” the “Legend of Good Women,” and other of his poems, may probably be referred. In the year 1369, Blanche, the wife of John of Gaunt, died, and Chaucer lamented her in a poem entitled “The Book of the Duchess,” in this, doubtless, he was sincere, although her removal, by increasing the power of his sister-in-law, Catherine Swinford, Gaunt’s mistress, unquestionably tended to the poet’s advantage. In 1370, he went abroad on the king’s service, and two years after occurred his memorable mission to Genoa. This journey (unless we suppose with Tytwhitt that the whole story is a myth) forms quite an epoch in the history of our poet. From Genoa he is said to have proceeded to Padua, and visited Petrarca there. The chief proof of this lies in a casual allusion in “The Canterbury Tales,” where the tale is said to have been

“Learned at Padua, of a worthy clerk—
 Francis Petrarca, the laureat poet,
 Highte this clerk, whose rhetoric sweet
 Illumin’d all Italye of poetry”

The tale here spoken of is that of "Patient Grisilde," which Petrarch only translated from Boccaccio "Why," says Godwin in his Life of Chaucer, "did Chaucer choose to confess his obligation for it to Petrarch rather than to Boccaccio, from whose volume Petrarch confessedly translated it? For this very natural reason—because he was eager to commemorate his interview with this venerable patriarch of Italian letters, and to record the pleasure he had reaped from his society." But surely if Chaucer had met Petrarch, he would have hinted of it in other parts of his Works, and in terms less obscure than these. Yet it is a pity to disabuse the world of even one of its delightful delusions, provided there is evidence enough to warrant the conclusion—"It might have been thus." And it is certainly a pleasant thought, that of the two Fathers of Modern Letters,—the one in the prime of life, the other in its decline—the one being forty-four, and the other sixty-eight years of age—the one the lover of Philippa, the other of Laura—distinguished both by learning, knowledge of affairs, and strong common sense, as well as by genius,—meeting and hailing each other. Previous to Chaucer's visit, Petrarch's glory, like that of a setting sun, was becoming brighter and broader ere its departure. Honours and advantages had been showered upon his old age. The city of Florence had restored his property; he had been received with distinction by Galeazzo Visconti at Milan, and by Charles IV. at Mantua, and his influence had brought about the long-desired return of the papal chair to Rome, under Urban, in 1367. But we doubt not that dearer still to his heart was the unexpected homage of this stranger—

"Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Was all meridian, as if never fann'd
By the rough wind that chills the polar flood"

The one had secured his immortality, and nearly finished his course, the other had as yet his *chef d'œuvre* to produce, and twenty-eight years more of life before him. Still they would become friends and brothers in an instant, and, we may conjecture, interchanged gifts—Chaucer giving Petrarch his "Romaunt of the Rose" and his "Troilus," and Petrarch presenting him with his Sonnets, or perchance with a portion of his unfi-

nished poem, entitled, "*Africa*," the child of his old age Their meeting was short, and then parting final On July 18, in 1374, in the village of Aiqua—

"The mountain village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years"—

Petrarch, the "*LAUREAT* poet," being so in a double sense, having repeatedly had the Laurel on his head, and having *Laura* ever in his heart, was found in his library, with his head resting on a book—dead

In this year of Petrarch's death, Chaucer returned to England Such was Edward's gratitude for his services, that, besides the lucrative office of Comptroller of Customs, mentioned before, he gave him the honorary grant of a pitcher of wine daily, which was afterwards commuted into an allowance of money He became thus the first, and, with the dubious exception of Spenser, is still the greatest of the *LAUREATES* of England It is supposed that the service for which he was so liberally rewarded was connected with hiring ships for our navy Even then, indeed, we got up for the nonce great naval armaments, but having few ships of our own, we were forced to borrow them for a consideration from the free states of Italy or Germany. This year, too, John of Gaunt added to his many favours by bestowing on Chaucer a grant of £10 for life In the next two years he was equally fortunate, obtaining first the wardship of Sir Edmund Staplegate's heir, for which he received £104, and then the value of some forfeited wool, to the amount of £71, 4s. 6d. His whole income is thought now to have amounted to £1000 (about, some say, £40,000 of our money!) the most enormous sum, surely, that ever belonged to a British poet In Chaucer's case, however, these splendid rewards befell him, not as a poet, but partly as a politician—an able and astute servant of the court—and partly from his wife's influence, through her sister, with the Gaunt family. Nevertheless, if he did not gain riches for his verses, he spent them like a true poet. He lived in great style, and splendour In 1376 and 1377 he was engaged abroad in diplomatic missions In the latter of these expeditions he went to France, along with Sir Guichard Dangle and Richard Stan or Surry, to treat of a marriage between Richard, Prince of

Wales, and Mary, a daughter of the French king, as well as to complain of some infringement of the truce between the two nations. Richard, however, was destined for another bride.

As the year 1377 was that in which the persecution of Wickliffe by the papal power began, this seems the proper place for alluding to the career of that great man, and to his connexion with our poet. As early as 1356, this "morning star of the Reformation" had commenced his career by inveighing against the authority of the Pope. Some years after, he became active in opposing the encroachments and ridiculing the pretensions of the mendicant friars. When disputes arose between Edward III and the court of Rome, in relation to the homage and tribute exacted from King John, Wickliffe, who by this time had become famous in Oxford as a lecturer on theology, and had taken the degree of D D, stepped forward in defence of the English side of the question, and a reply he produced to a monk who advocated the claims of the Church, procured him the patronage of John of Gaunt. Promotions of various kinds followed, and, flushed by success, he became bolder and bolder, venturing to affix the title Antichrist to the papal brow. This could not be borne, and in the year 1377, Gregory XI launched three bulls against Wickliffe, condemning his doctrine, ordering his seizure and imprisonment, and requiring the king and government to assist, if needful, in extirpating his heresy. Edward died this year, but the Reformer found an efficient protector in John of Gaunt, who had now become one of the regents of the kingdom during the minority of Richard. Wickliffe, at the citation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, appeared at St Paul's Church, attended by a prodigious concourse of people, and supported by the Duke of Lancaster and the Earl Marshal. An altercation took place between the bishops and the noblemen, and the meeting broke up in tumult and disorder. The Reformer afterwards attended at Lambeth palace, and delivered to the two prelates a defence of his doctrines. Here, too, he was accompanied and protected by great crowds, and the bishops, overawed, dismissed him without passing a judgment. He was subsequently deserted by Gaunt, and his opinions were condemned by the Parliament. He remained

unmolested, however, personally, and, returning to his rectory at Lutterworth, continued to preach and executed a translation of the Scriptures into English. He died on the 31st December 1384, sixty years of age. His teachings and his translation of the Bible had a powerful effect at home, and still more abroad. His voice was reverberated from Bohemia by John Huss, and the influence of his writings in Germany may be gathered from the fact that the Council of Constance, years after his death, ordered his bones to be exhumed and burnt, which was done accordingly in 1425. Our readers will remember Thomas Fuller's exquisite account of this act of imbecile and belated bigotry.

"Chaucer," says old Foxe the Martyrologist, "was a right Wicklavian, or else there never was any." This is undoubtedly overstated, but there can be as little doubt that he had strong sympathies with Wickliffe and his cause. To this contributed his early habits of intimacy with the Reformer—the admiration he must have felt for his powers of mind, his learning, his boldness and his moral integrity—his contempt for the clergy and the corruptions of the Papal Church—his intimacy with the John of Gaunt faction—and the rebound he, as well as every noble spirit in Europe, felt against the cold, consolidated, mundanstangling, heart-crushing tyranny of Rome. Chaucer had been repeatedly, too, on the Continent, and in the sentiments of Petrarch, of Boccaccio, and other learned and gifted men, heard the first heavings and cracklings of the ice which were, in less than two centuries, to issue in the glorious spring of the Reformation. He stood to Wickliffe very much in the relation in which Erasmus at first stood to Luther, and his poems, in their liberal and genial spirit and their satirical exposure of prevailing evils, were a distinct, though less vehement, protest against Popery, and concerted well with the lion-like voice which came forth from the parsonage of Lutterworth.

Yet the true Laureate of the Lollards, as the Wickliffites were soon denominated, was not Chaucer, but one John Ball, called by his enemies a "crazy priest." This man perambulated Middlesex and the adjacent counties, as the orator and poet of the poorer classes of the community—now preaching after mass,

now disputing with the friars, and now setting his revolutionary thoughts to homely, jingling rhymes, such as the famous one—

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?”

This person, who seemed a kind of caricature of the Hebrew prophets, attained wonderful power and popularity in the land—was counted a public pest by all the conservative classes, but hailed by the populace as an oracle, and the herald of a coming deliverance. For twenty years he thus circulated, according to Walsingham, with whom he is no favourite, “promulgating the perverse crotchets of the perfidious John Wickliffe, and a vast deal besides which it would be tedious to tell of.” It is even said that he organised associations of a political kind among the seifs of Essex and Kent, and distributed among the people little fly-leaves containing strange incendiary matter, couched in muendoes and figurative language, and where more was meant than met the ear. Such sibylline verses and leaves fluttered out—and truly—the tidings of a terrible convulsion coming on the country.

Amidst this troubled state of things, Edward died and Richard II, not yet twelve years of age, was called to the throne, under the joint-regency of his three uncles, the Dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester. Chaucer, at this time and for some years before, was living in content and splendour at a house granted by the king, near the royal manor at Woodstock, where he was surrounded by every circumstance of distinction and luxury, as well as by scenery of great richness and beauty. There have been since many changes made on the ground, but they still, we believe, point out the poet's walk, and some old oaks, which must often have shadowed his brow during the noon-day heats, are still waving there. The accession of Richard at first rather added to than diminished Chaucer's good fortune. His annuity of twenty marks and his comptrolleriship were confirmed, and in lieu of the daily pitcher of wine, another annuity of twenty marks was conferred on him. But, in common with all the loyal of the land, he was soon startled (1381) by the insurrection, so long brooding, of the seifs under Wat Tyler. This man, a tile, as his name imports, resenting an insult to his

beautiful daughter by an officer who was collecting the poll-tax, felled him to the ground with one blow. This occurred in Dartford in Kent, and acted as a spark to the inflammable materials in the adjacent regions. A formidable insurrection rose like an exhalation, caused partly by the unextinguished resentment of the Saxons against their Norman conquerors, partly by Lollardism, and partly by a feeling of oppression and physical suffering. Sixty thousand men assembled on Blackheath, and thence proceeded to London, which they occupied without resistance. They demanded the abolition of bondage, the liberty of buying and selling in markets and fairs, a general pardon, and a reduction of the rent of land. The insurrection continued for a fortnight, during which the mob of artisans and "villains" kept possession of London, burnt palaces, and beheaded the Archbishop of Canterbury, and various other persons of eminence. The throne was trembling to its base, and at last the king agreed to hold an interview with Wat Tyler, with a view to make concessions. This took place accordingly in Smithfield, where, however, the Lord Mayor, Walworth, pretending that Tyler seemed about to seize on the king's bridle, struck him down with his mace, some of the servants following up the blow, and killing the postulate insurgent. The mob instantly lost heart and dispersed. John Ball, with some of the other leaders, and about fifteen hundred of the lower ranks, were hanged.

This revolt was truly a sign of the times, and must have so appeared to all intelligent eyes, including that of our poet. It certified monarchs and bishops that there was such a class as the lower, and that if they had been trampled on like dust, it was the inflammable dust of powder, on which the feet of tyrants were not always to tread softly, it sounded the knell of serfdom or "villainage," and, like a red morning sky, it augured the day of storm, which swiftly succeeded. The outbreak of the "villains" was scarcely over till two parties among the gentry and nobles arose—one the Court party, with De la Pole and De Vere at their head, both great favourites of the king, and another, which might almost be called the Country party, led by the Duke of Gloucester and John of Gaunt. The struggle between them was fierce, attended by various vicissitudes, and was

not finally settled till Richard II, having first exclaimed, if Shakspeare's words be as true as they are exquisite—

"Oh that I were a mockery king of snow,
To melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke!"—

finally dissolved in his beams, and Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, and better known to us as Henry IV, ascended the throne

Meanwhile, there occurred a somewhat mysterious passage in the history of our poet. Hitherto his course had been almost uniformly successful. The most enviable prizes and golden distinctions had dropped like ripe summer fruit around his path. Rocky difficulties of diplomacy had yielded to his word as to the Open Sesame of Arabian magic. It had been his uniformly, poet and protester though he was, to

"Pursue the triumph and partake the gale"

He was revelling in wealth. But now, from causes which are obscure, his affairs fell into such confusion that he was obliged to resort to the king's protection to save him from his creditors. Some have said that his pecuniary distresses were pretended. Be this as it may, he fell, for a considerable time about this period of his life, from various causes, under a cloud.

His great friend and patron, the Duke of Lancaster, had loved and supported Wickliffe chiefly because he had wavered with the clergy. But when the insurrection of Wat Tyler was imputed to the Wickliffites, the duke is said to have withdrawn his countenance from them, and disclaimed their doctrines. His conduct in this matter, seeming to "palter in a double sense," did not add to his popularity, and so far injured his *protégé* as well as himself. Still there is evidence that Chaucer, whatever his notions on religious subjects might be, and whether he altered them or not according to circumstances, was faithful to his friends when men sought to blackball them for heresy. In 1384, John Combeaton, commonly called John of Northampton, when about to be re-chosen as Mayor of London, was fiercely opposed by the clergy on account of his reforming sentiments. So dreadful was the commotion produced by his re-election, that the court had to employ force to suppress it. Some lives were lost, Combeaton

was imprisoned, and Chaucei, who had exerted his utmost influence in his favour, had to fly, first to Hainault, where his matrimonial connexions lived, then to France, and finally to Zealand. He had repeatedly visited the Continent before, but always as an envoy of Majesty, he now reached it as a fugitive and an exile, losing besides his office in the Customs, and, it is said, a seat in Parliament, where he had been elected as knight of the shire for Kent. He carried out with him a considerable supply of money, and liberally shared it with his fellow-sufferers who were fugitives for the same cause. Thus he exhausted his stock, and reaped, as it proved, no gratitude in exchange. His friends patched up their own peace with the English Government—returned home, and then, as the butler with Joseph, remembered not Chaucei their benefactor, but forgot him: they neither tried to procure him a pardon, nor even sent him supplies to aid him while abroad. He contrived, however, to find his way back to England, and was welcomed by a cell in the Tower. Here he was at first treated with great rigour, but ultimately procured release by disclosing all he knew about the political affair in which he had been involved, and offering, too, to substantiate his charges against the accused parties, by entering the lists of combat. He wrote now his "Testament of Love," to express his feelings of grief and indignation at this crisis of his life. He was now at liberty, but deeply disgusted by the treatment he had met—sick seemingly of the world at large, and his wife having died, (1377,) he began to take measures to secure his permanent retreat. He was now sixty years of age, and felt probably the strong impression that his real work as a poet was yet to be achieved. He resolved to dispose of his two pensions or patents of twenty marks each, and in May 1388 he surrendered them in favour of one John Scalby. Some suppose that the same year he returned to his old haunt of Woodstock, and, according to one of his biographers, employed most of his time in revising and correcting his poems and enjoying the calm pleasures of a country life. It is generally thought, too, that in 1389 he commenced his *magnum opus*, "The Canterbury Tales," and if so, it is certainly not a little remarkable that Chaucei began at sixty-one to write a work which was his noblest title

to fame, and which it was Dryden's task and his immortality to imitate in his Fables when he was seventy

Nevertheless, (although this only increases our wonder at his powers,) there seems some reason to believe that Chaucer did not retire quite so early to his beloved shades. In 1389, we find him appointed Clerk of the Works at Westminster, and next year he is registered as holding the same office at Windsor. These, however, were only temporary posts, held each of them for about twenty months. For some years after this we hear nothing of him, and now we may conjecture that after his twenty months' clerkship had expired, he retreated, somewhat in a Parthian fashion, to the oaks of Woodstock—like Burke, when about the same age, to those of Beaconsfield—and there collected the *spolia opima* of his genius. We shall in our next paper have occasion to speak of the merits of "The Canterbury Tales," suffice it at present simply to renew our expression of astonishment how a man in his grand climacteric should be capable of the freshness of fancy, the juvenility of feeling, the racy humour, and the elastic vigour of style which distinguish these productions. Burke wrote his "Regicide Peace," and Godwin his "Cloudesley," later in life still, but the latter is heavy and garrulously prolix, and the former, although in grandeur and depth perhaps the finest of Burke's works, is heavy laden with gloom and despondency. Both are evidently the works of old men, with the powers of manhood entire, but its spirit evaporated, while our poet writes as if still in the lustiness of life, and the

"Breezes blowing in old Chaucer's verse"—

as Alexander Smith finely calls them—are verily, in Gray's language,

"Redolent of joy and youth,
And breathe a second spring"

There are, indeed, here and there, traces in them of a soured and disappointed spirit, but these scars of age, like the rents in a ruin, are almost hid under the rich foliage of his wit and fancy.

It adds to our wonder when we are told that although, in 1394, the king gave him an annuity of £20, yet he was, from that year to 1398, in a state of "sheer, unmistakable poverty"

So says Sir Harris Nicholas. This is the more surprising, when we know that John of Gaunt, who had been abroad for some time engaged in an attempt to gain the crown of Castile, had now returned to England, and had at length married the poet's sister-in-law—Lady Catherine Swinford, formerly Catherine Rouet, and his mistress. It was thus in age, widowhood, poverty, and desolation that Chaucer wrote his great work—his “Comedy,” as he called it—which he had determined to make the most elaborate production of his pen, and an everlasting trophy of his genius. One is forcibly reminded of the circumstances in which Milton wrote his “Paradise Lost,” and the other poems of his old age. But these, as well as Burke's last writings, are shaded by melancholy, and remind you of the Pyramids or the Sphinx, seen under the wing of a gathering thunder-cloud; whereas Chaucer's work, notwithstanding all its touches of pathos and sublimity, and the occasional bitterness of its sarcasm, is essentially a “Comedy,” a glad and genial transcript of a glad and genial page of human life. It is fabled of a magician in eastern story that he had the power of returning at certain seasons from age to youth, of literally “renewing his youth” when he chose, although not permanently. One could conceive this enviable power to be possessed by Chaucer, and that the music of the wind-stirred oaks of Woodstock, like a wizard melody, transported him to the happy days when he first danced in a courtly revel with Philippa, when he tilted at a tournament with Edward the Black Prince, or when, amidst the golden sunshine and under the blue skies of Italy, he gazed with wondering joy at the furrowed brow and beaming eye of Laura's lover.

Previous to this he had written a learned treatise on the Astrolabe for the use of his son Lewis, who, at the time when it was written, (1391,) was ten years of age. This is the only circumstance about Chaucer's family which his biographers admit to be thoroughly authentic. Some have talked of his having had by his wife a son called Thomas, and other children, but their existence seems exceedingly problematical. The name Thomas Chaucer does indeed often occur in the records of these times, he was Speaker of the House of Commons, but there is little evidence that he was a connexion of the poet. Of the history of Lewis, we

know nothing Leland, Wood, and Bale, indeed, place him under the tuition of his father's friend, Nicholas Strode, of Merton College, Oxford, but it has been said, "If Wood could trace Strode no further than the year 1370, it is impossible that he could have been the tutor of Chaucer's son in 1391."

About "evening-time" there came a gleam of light upon Chaucer's affairs. In 1398, Richard II. granted to him his "protection for two years." In 1399, he allotted him a pipe of wine annually. And when at last the "mockery king" had melted away before Bolingbroke's young son, the new monarch, true to his father's example, confirmed to Chaucer the grants of £20 and the pipe of wine, and gave him an additional grant of an annuity of forty marks. Strange to tell, some of his biographers represent him as living at this time in Dunnington Castle, in Berkshire, which it seems he had purchased some short time before, for up to 1394 it was in the possession of Sir Richard Abberbury. How to reconcile the purchase and possession of a castle with "sheer, unmistakeable poverty," and at best the position of a pensionary dependent, nourished on the dmsings of the royal cellar, we cannot tell. Tytwhitt remarks that the tradition noticed by Evelyn in his "*Sylva*" of an oak in Dunnington Park called Chaucer's oak, may be accounted for without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the castle was undoubtedly in the hands of the aforesaid Thomas Chaucer for many years.

Chaucer did not live long after this. And yet when we come to inquire into the causes of his death, we are, as usual, entangled in a mesh of contradictory conjectures. His biographers, having brought him to Dunnington Castle from Woodstock, send him up next on a bootless errand to London. He went there to solicit a continuance of his annuities, but found such difficulties in the way as hastened his end. Certain it is, that on the 24th of December 1399, his name occurs (for the last time in any extant record) in a lease made to him by the Abbot-prior and Convent of Westminster, of a tenement situated in the garden of the chapel, at the yearly rent of 53s 4d. It is probable that it was in this house, which stood on the site of Henry VII's Chapel, that our poet at length died, on the 25th of October 1400, in his seventy-third year.

As to his creed in death, opinion, or rather conjecture, is again divided. Most of his biographers make him die a member of the Church of Rome. John Foxe, as we have seen, claims him as a Wickliffite. Waiton, in his Essay on Pope, says that Chaucer as well as Dante held the papal power to be Antichrist, an assertion which Bossuet has tried with great pains to refute. Whether he died Papist or Protestant, his end is believed to have been devout and edifying. Wood, in his Annals, informs us that although he did not repent at the last of his reflections at the clergy, "yet of that he wrote of love and bawdry it grieved him much on his deathbed, for one that lived shortly after his time maketh report that when he saw death approaching, he did often cry out 'Woe is me, woe is me, that I cannot recall and annul those things which I have written of the base and filthy love of men towards women, but alas! they are now continued from man to man, and I cannot do what I desire.'" It is said, too, that he produced the lines, "Gods Counsaile of Chaucer," when on his deathbed, and in great anguish. We quote the last stanza—

"That thee is sent receive in buxomness,
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall,
Here is no home, here is but wilderness—
Forth, pilgrim, forth—beast, out of thy stall
Look up on high, and thanke God of all,
Weve [leave] thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede"

Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the south transept aisle, in that part which has since become Poets' Corner. A century and a half had to elapse ere a monument was erected over his ashes. This was done at the expense of one Nicholas Bingham, a gentleman of Oxford, himself a poet, and an enthusiastic admirer of our author. It stands at the north end of a magnificent recess, formed by four obtuse foliaged arches, and is a plain altar, with three quatrefoils, and the same number of shields. The inscription and figures on the back are nearly obliterated. It was fit that Chaucer, the Father of English poetry, should be first of his tribe to lie down in that great gathering-place of the dust of poets.

Chaucei died, as he had lived, amidst unquiet times Henry IV had been seated on the throne, and Richard, whom he had supplanted, was dead in prison. But though the wind was down, the sea continued to ride high. In the very year of our poet's death, a plot among the disaffected nobles to remove "ingrate and canker'd Bolingbroke," was discovered just in time to prevent its success, and many executions of men of rank were the result. To ingratiate himself with the clergy, Henry, much against his will, had to surrender the Lollards to the fury and flames of their adversaries. As if to avenge their blood, enemy after enemy now rose against England. First, the Gascons refused submission—although they were speedily subdued by an army. Then Wales was stirred to its deepest valley by the birth of the great Glendower, and, rising, captured Mortimer, Earl of March, the lineal heir to the Crown. The Earl of Northumberland wished to treat for his ransom, but was not permitted by Henry. This and other circumstances connected with the Scotch prisoners taken at the battle of Homildon, by Northumberland and his famous son Hotspur, led to an alienation between them and their king, who was also their kinsman, and whom they had aided in establishing on the throne. Hence arose the formidable coalition—glorified for ever in the pages of Shakspeare—of Owen Glendower, Douglas, and Henry Percy or Hotspur, against the government of Henry—a coalition broken at Shrewsbury on the 21st of July 1403, after a desperate conflict in which the king himself and his son, afterwards the Harry of Agincourt, greatly distinguished themselves. Even after this, continual revolts, wars, and rumours of wars annoyed Henry IV, until at last in the very prime of life, not full forty-six, and having only reigned thirteen years, he breathed his last. His grand desire latterly was to carry his wearied body and sore wounded spirit to Jerusalem, to expiate in the warfare of the Cross, but, instead, he died—if we may credit Shakspeare—in a chamber bearing the same name —

"King Henry Doth any name particular belong
Unto the chamber where I first did swoon?"

Warwick 'Tis call'd Jerusalem, my noble lord

King Henry Laud be to God! even there my life must end

It hath been prophesied to me many years,
I should not die but in Jerusalem
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land
But bear me to that chamber—there I'll lie—
In *that* Jerusalem shall Henry die”

Of the influence of Chaucer on English poetry we may have occasion to speak in an after paper. There can be no question that his training and history were admirably adapted for rearing him up as the parent of a healthy, hardy literature—a literature abhorrent of morbidity and one-sidedness—courteous and fair to all classes of the community—blending *seria cum jocis*—feeling that the thread of life is a mingled yarn of good and ill together, and that it is not the part of one aspiring to the character of a popular and large-hearted poet, to spin that thread finer or softer than Nature has done. Chaucer, accordingly, was a man of the world as well as a bard, was a courtier most of his life, and yet had evidently mingled much with the people too—having perhaps himself sprung from the ranks, and, at all events, having ate his commons as a poor student at the universities. He had while abroad seen many men, and studied the manners of various nations, he had reached, for that age, an unprecedented stretch of charity, blended with the powers of a “good hater” and a potential reformer. Loyal to his king, respectful to the nobility, and chivalrously gallant to the beauty and fashion of the age, he had yet strong ties uniting him to the Movement Party, and perhaps, but for the foolish conduct of the John Balls and the Wat Tyleys, might have taken a more decided stand in its favour.

A curious claim has been put in for Chaucer to a connexion with royalty. An ingenious writer in the *Retrospective Review* thus states it—“John of Gaunt ultimately (after the death of the Castilian princess his second wife) married Catherine Pickard Rouet, the sister of Chaucer’s wife. This lady, ere her marriage, had born to Gaunt several illegitimate children, from one of whom Henry VII was descended. And thus did the poet Chaucer, by matrimonial affinity, become allied to the royal family of England, and lived to see, in the person of Henry IV, the son of his brother-in-law seated upon the English throne.

And if the grandeur of posthumous relationship could confer any additional lustre on the memory of superior genius, it might be remarked, that, according to the statements of an elaborate genealogist of the age of Charles I, among those to whom, in the course of descent, this alliance had given collateral affinity to the family of the father of English poetry, there could at that time have been enumerated in succession no less than eight kings, four queens, and five princesses of England, six kings and three queens of Scotland, two cardinals, upwards of twenty dukes, and almost as many duchesses, of England, several dukes of Scotland, besides many potent princes and eminent nobility in foreign parts "

It remains at present only to trace the bibliographical history of Chaucer's poems

The immortal William Caxton, the father of English printing; as Chaucer of English poetry, in 1474 published the first typographical work ever executed in England,—namely, "The Game and Playe of the Chesse." A year or two later, a MS copy, very imperfect, however, of "The Canterbury Tales," fell into his hands, and, struck with their fascinating qualities, he gave them his imprimatur. This was in 1475 or 1476. This coming to the knowledge of William Thynne, Esq, who happened to be in possession of a much better MS, he communicated it to Caxton. The printer, six years after the appearance of the first, gave to the public a second, and very much extended and improved edition. A third edition of "The Canterbury Tales," supposed to have been a copy of the second, is believed to have been published in 1495, "collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde, at Westmester," but this, at any rate, could only have been a copy of Caxton's second edition, as he himself died in 1491 or 1492. There then succeeded two editions by Pynson—the first with no date—the second in 1526, and in this one there appeared a few of the other poems attributed to Chaucer.

"The Canterbury Tales" were devoured with ravenous avidity, and a strong desire for more from the same hand was generally entertained. To gratify this, Mr Thynne carefully superintended a complete edition of all the poems that had then

come to light, and dedicated it to Henry VIII, that "most gracious, virtuous, and of God most elect and worthy prince, in whom of very merite, duty, and succession was renewed the glorious title of Defensor of the Christian Faith," and who, as the "most excellent, and in all virtues most Protestant prince," was alone deemed deserving to patronise the works of this wonderful disinterested poet.

It is questionable if any copy of this primitive edition of Chaucer's collected works be extant. But Tytwhitt holds that the edition printed by Thomas Godfrey in 1532, if not the very edition of Thynne, which he believes it is, is assuredly copied from it, and may therefore be regarded in all critical references to be the original edition of the general works of the author. No further additions seem to have been made to this till Stowe and Speght published their successive editions in 1561, 1598 or 1599, and 1602. In these there are some spurious additions, such as "The Cook's Tale," "The Squire's," "The Cook's Second Tale," and "Gamelyn," but "The Court of Love," "The Flower and the Leaf," and "Chaucer's Dream," are thoroughly worthy of the great name and fame of their author. In the former volume, honourable mention was made of Mr Tytwhitt's important contributions to the reputation and the understanding of Chaucer, by his admirable edition of "The Canterbury Tales," of which our own may be called almost a reproduction. The plan of our series confines us principally to that work, but in our preliminary essay to the next or third volume, we propose, besides a general estimate of Chaucer's genius, and some critical remarks on his principal work, to give a short analysis of, and a few extracts from, his "Troilus and Cresside," his "Court of Love," his "Legend of Good Women," his "Flower and the Leaf," his "House of Fame," and one or two other of his less generally known, but characteristic and admirable poems.

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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

EXPERIENCE, though none authority 5583
Were in this world, is ight enough for me
To speak of woe that is in marriage
For, lordings, since I twelve year was of age,
(Thanked be God that is etein on live,)
Husbands at churche door have I had fve,
(If I so often might have wedded be,)
And all were worthy men in their degice 5590

But me was told, not longe time agone is,
That sithen¹ Chriſt ne went never but onis
To wedding, in the Cane² of Gahlee,
That by that ilk² ensample taught he me,
That I ne shoulde wedded be but ones
Lo, heaſke eke, what a ſharp word for the nones,³
Beside a welle Jeſu, God and man,
Spake in reproof of the Samaritan
'Thou haſt yhadde fve husbands,' ſaid he,
'And thiſke man, that now hath wedded thee, 5600

¹ Since

² Same

³ Occasion

* 'Cane' Cana—John ii.

	Is not thine husband ' thus said he certain , 5601 What that he meant thereby, I cannot sayn But that I ask, why that the fifthe man Was none husband to the Samaritan? How many might she have in marriage? Yet heard I never tellen in mine age Upon this number definitioun, Men may divine, and glosen ¹ up and down
¹ Com- ment	But well I wot, express withouten lie, God bade us for to wax and multiply , 5610 That gentle text can I well understand Eke well I wot, he said, that mine husband Should leave father and mother, and take to me, But of no number mentioun made he, Of bigamy or of octogamy, Why should men then speak of it villamy?
² Lord	Lo here the wise king Dan ² Solomon, I trow he hadde wives moie than one, (As woulde God it lawful were to me To be refieshed half so oft as he) 5620
³ What sort of	Which ³ a gift of God had he for all his wives? No man hath such, that in this world on live is
⁴ Under standing	God wot, this noble king, as to my wit, ⁴ The firste night had many a moiey fit
⁵ In life	With each of them, so well was him on live ⁵ Blessed be God that I have wedded five, Welcome the sixthe when that ever he shall For since I will not keep me chaste in all, When mine husband is from the world ygone, Some Christian man shall wedden me anon 5630
⁶ On God's part.	For then the apostle saith that I am free To wed, a' God's half, ⁶ where it liketh me He saith, that to be wedded is no sin,
⁷ Burn	Better is to be wedded than to burne ⁷

What recketh me though folk say villany	5635	
Of shiewed ¹ Lamech, and his bigamy ²		¹ Ill-temp ered
I wot well Abiaham was an holy man,		
And Jacob eke, as far as ever I can, ²		² Know
And each of them had wives more than two,		
And many another holy man also	5640	
Where can ye see in any manner age		
That highe God defended ³ marriage		³ Forbade
By éxpress woid ² I pray you telleth ⁴ me,		⁴ Tell
Or where commanded he vnginity ²		
I wot as well as ye, it is no dread, ⁵		⁵ Doubt
The apostle, when he spake of maidenhead,		
He said, that precept thereof had he none		
Men may counsél a woman to be one, ⁶		⁶ Rem ^{ain} a maid
But counselling is no commandement,		
He put it in our owen judgement	5650	
For hadde God commanded maidenhead,		
Then had he damned ⁷ wedding out of dread,		⁷ Condem ned
And certes, if there were no seed ysow,		
Vnginity then whicreof should it grow ²		
Paul duiste not commanden at the lest ⁸		⁸ Least
A thing, of which his Master gave no hest ⁹		⁹ Com- mand
The dart ¹⁰ is set up for vngimty,		¹⁰ Goal
Catch whoso may, who runneth best let see.		
But this word is not take of every wight,		
But there as God will give it of his might	5660	
I wot well that the apostle was a maid,		
But natheless, though that he wrote and		
said,		
He would that every wight were such as he,		
All n'is but counsel to vnginity		
And for to be a wife he gave me leave,		
Of indulgence, so n'is it no reprove ¹¹		¹¹ Reproof
To wedden me, if that my make ¹² die,		¹² Hus band,

	Without excepti3n of bigamy ,	5668
	All were it good no woman for to touch, (He meant as in his bed or in his couch,) For peril is both fire and tow to assemble, Ye know what this example may resemble This is all and some, he held virginity	
¹ Frailty	More perfect than wedding in feefty ¹ (Frailty clepe I, but if that he and she Would lead then lives all in chastity,) I giant it well, I have of none envy, Who maidenhead prefer to bigamy,	
² Mind	It liketh them to be clean in body and ghost, ² Of mine estate I will not maken boast	5680
	For well ye know, a lord in his household Ne hath not every vessel all of gold Some be of tree, and do then lord service	
³ Calleth	God clepeth ³ folk to him in sundry wise, And evereach hath of God a proper gift,	
⁴ To divide	Some this, some that, as that him liketh shift ⁴ Virginity is great perfecti3n, And continence eke with devoti3n -	
⁵ Fountain	But Christ, that of perfecti3n is well, ⁵ Ne bade not every wight he should go sell	5690
⁶ Doctrine	All that he had, and give it to the poor, And in such wise follow him and his loie ⁶ He spake to them that would live perfectly, And, lordings, (by your leave,) that am not I, I will bestow the flower of all mine age In th' actes and the fruit of marriage Tell me also, to what conclusi3n Were members made of generati3n, And of so perfect wise a wight ywrought? Trusteth me well, they were not made for nought Glose whoso will, and say both up and down,	5701

That they were made for purgatioun Of unne, and of othei thinges smale, And eke to know a female from a male: And for none othei cause? say ye no? The experieñce wot well it is not so So that the cleikes be not with me wioth, I say this, that they maked ¹ be for both, This is to say, for office, ² and for ease ³ Of engendiue, there we not God displease.	5702	
Why should men elles in then bookes set, That man shall yelden to his wife her debt? Now wherewith should he make his payement, If he ne used his silly instrument? Then were they made upon a creature To purge unne, and eke for engendiue But I say not that every wight is hold, That hath such hainess as I to you told, To go and usen them in engendiue, Then should men take of chastity no cure ⁴	5710	¹ Made ² Duty ³ Pleasure
Christ was a maid, and shapen as a man, And many a saint, since that this world began, Yet lived they ever in perfect chastity I n'll ⁵ envy ⁶ with no virginity Let them with bread of pure ⁷ wheat be fed, And let us wives eaten barley bread And yet with barley bread, Mark tellen can, Our Lord Jesu refreshed many a man In such estate as God hath cleped ⁸ us, I will perséver, I n'am not precious, ⁹ In wifehood will I use mine instrument As freely as my Maker hath it sent If I be dangerous ¹⁰ God give me sorrow, Mine husband shall it have both even and morrow, When that him list come forth and pay his debt.	5720	⁴ Care
	5730	⁵ Will not ⁶ Contend ⁷ Purified
		⁸ Called. ⁹ Nice, or scrupu- lous
		¹⁰ Sparing, or dif- ficult

¹ Hind-
rance

An husband will I have, I will not let,¹ 573
Which shall be both my debtor and my thrall,
And have his tribulacioun withal
Upon his flesh, while that I am his wife.
I have the power during all my life
Upon his proper body, and not he,
Right thus the apostle told it unto me,
And bade our husbands for to love us well,

² What

All this sentence me liketh every del²
Up start the Pardoner, and that anon,
'Now, Dame,' quod he, 'by God and by Saint John
Ye been a noble preachei in this case.

³ Suffer

I was about to wed a wife, alas!
What? should I bie³ it on my flesh so deai?

⁴ Rather,

⁵ This year

Yet had I levei⁴ wed no wife to-year⁵ 5750

'Abide,' quod she, 'my tale is not begun
Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tun
Ere that I go, shall savour worse than ale
And when that I have told thee forth my tale
Of tribulacioun in mariage,
Of which I am expert in all mine age,
(This is to say, myself hath been the whip,)
Then may'st thou choosen whether thou wilt sip
Of thilke tunne, that I shall abioach⁵
Beware of it, ere thou too nigh approach 5760
For I shall tell ensamples more than ten.
Whoso that n'll bewaie by other men
By him shall other men corrected be
These same wordes writeth Ptolomy,
Read in his Almagest, and take it there'
'Dame, I would pray you, if your will it were,'
Sade this Pardoner, 'as ye began,
Tell forth your tale, and spareth for no man,
And teacheth us young men of your practique'

⁶ Broach

Gladly, quod she, since that it may you like But that I pray to all this company,	5771	
If that I speak after my fantasy, As taketh not a grief ¹ of that I say, For mine intent is not but for to play		¹ Not be offended.
Now, sirs, then will I tell you forth my tale As ever may I drinken wine or ale I shall say sooth, the husbands that I had As three of them were good, and two were bad The three were goode men and rich and old. Unethes ² mighten they the statute hold,	5780	² With dif- ficulty
In which that they were bounden unto me Yet wot well what I mean of this, paidie As God me help, I laugh when that I think, How piteously a-night I made them swink, ³ But by my fay, I told of it no storic ⁴ They had me given their land and their treasorie, Me needed not do longer diligence To win then love, or do them reverence They loved me so well, by God above, That I ne told no danty ⁵ of their love	5790	³ Labour ⁴ Held it of no use ⁵ Set no value on
A wise woman will busy her ever in one ⁶ To gotten then love, there ⁷ as she hath none But since I had them wholly in mine hand, And that they hadde given me all their land, What should I taken keep them for to please, ⁸ But it were for my profit, or mine ease? I set them so a-woike, by my fay, That many a night they sangen Wala-wa! The bacon was not fet ⁹ for them, I trow, That some men have in Essex at Dunmow.	5800	⁶ Constant- ly ⁷ As long ⁸ Care. ⁹ Fetched.
I govern'd them so well after my law, That each of them full blissful was and fawe ¹⁰ To bringen me gay thinges from the fair.		¹⁰ Fain.

	they were full glade when I spake them fair,	580
	For God it wot, I chid them spiteously ¹	
	Now hearkeneth how I bare me properly	
	Ye wise wives, that can understand,	
² Make them be heve	Thus shall ye speak, and bear them wrong on hand, ²	
³ Lie	For half so boldely can there no man	
	Swearen and lien ³ as a woman can	581
	(I say not this by wives that be wise,	
	But if it be when they them misadvise)	
⁴ Know	A wise wife if that she can ⁴ hei good,	
⁵ Mad	Shall bearen them on hand the cow is wood, ⁵	
	And taken witness of thei owen maid	
	Of their assent but hearkeneth how I said	
	‘Sir olde kaynard,* is this thine array?’	
	Why is my neighebourne’s wife so gay?	
	She is honou’ d over all where she go’th,	
	I sit at home, I have no thifty cloth	5820
	What dost thou at my neighebourne’s house?	
	Is she so fan? art thou so amorous?	
⁶ Whisper-est	What rownest ⁶ thou with our maid? <i>benedicite</i> ,	
⁷ Buffoon-eries	Sir olde lecher, let thy japes ⁷ be	
	‘And if I have a gossip, or a friend,	
	(Withouten gult,) thou chidest as a fiend,	
	If that I walk or play unto his house	
	‘Thou comest home as drunken as a mouse,	
⁸ Evil may it prove!	And preachest on thy bench, with evil pefe. ⁸	
⁹ Expense	Thou sayst to me, it is a great mischief	5830
¹⁰ Kindred	To wed a poore woman, for costage ⁹	
	And if that she be rich of high parage, ¹⁰	
	Then sayst thou, that it is a tormentry,	
	To suffer her pride and her melánocholy	
	And if that she be fan, thou very knave,	
¹¹ Whore-monger	Thou sayst that every holour ¹¹ will her have	

* ‘Kaynard’ a French term of reproach—from ‘canis’

She may no while in chastity abide,	5837	
That is assailed upon every side		
Thou sayst some folk desire us for richés,		
Some for our shape, and some for our faunness,		
And some, for she can either sing or dance,		
And some for gentiless and dalliance,		
Some for her handes and her armes smale		
Thus go'th all to the devil by thy tale		
Thou sayst, men may not keep a castle wall,		
It may so long assail'd be over all		
And if that she be foul, thou sayst, that she		
Coveteth every man that she may see,		
For as a spaniel, she will on him leap,		
Till she may finden some man her to chepe ¹	5850	¹ Buy
Ne none so grey goose go'th there in the lake,		
(As sayst thou) that will be without a make ²		² Mate
And sayst, it is an hard thing for to weld ³		³ Govern
A thing, that no man will, his thanks, ⁴ held		⁴ With his will
'Thus sayst thou, lorel, ⁵ when thou go'st to bed,		⁵ Good-for-nothing
And that no wise man needeth for to wed,		
Nor no man that intendeth unto heaven		
With wilde thunder dint and fiery leven ⁶		⁶ Lightning
Mote ⁷ thy welked ⁸ necke be to-bioke		⁷ May
'Thou sayst, that dropping houses, and eke smoke,		⁸ Withered
And chiding wives maken men to flee	5861	
Out of their own house, ah! <i>benedicite</i> ,		
What aileth such an old man for to chide?		
'Thou sayst, we wives will our vices hide,		
Till we be fast, and then we will them shew		
Well may that be a proverb of a shrew		
'Thou sayst, that oxen, asses, horse, and hounds,		
They be assayed ⁹ at diverse stounds, ¹⁰		⁹ Proved
Basons, laveres, ere that men them buy,		¹⁰ Seasons
Spoons, stooles, and all such husbandry,	5870	

	And so be pottes, clothes, and array,	5871
	But folk of wives maken none assay,	
	Till they be wedded, olde dotard shiew ¹	
	And then, sayst thou, we will our vices shew	
	‘Thou sayst also, that it displeaseth me,	
	But if that thou wilt praisen my beauty,	
	And but thou poie alway upon my face,	
¹ Call	And clepe ¹ me fair dame in every place,	
² That	And but thou make a feast on thilke ² day	
	That I was born, and make me fiesh and gay,	5880
³ Nurse	And but thou do to my noice ³ honou ^r ,	
⁴ Chamber maid	And to my chambereie ⁴ within my bowel,	
⁵ Rela- tions	And to my father’s folk, and mine allies, ⁵	
	Thus sayst thou, olde banel full of lies	
	‘And yet also of our pientice Jenkin,	
	For his crisp han, shuning as gold so fine,	
	And for he squeneth me both up and down,	
	Yet hast thou caught a false suspecti ^o n	
	I will him not, though thou were dead to-morrow.	
	‘But tell me this, why hidest thou with sorow	
	The keyes of thy chost away from me ²	5891
	It is my good as well as thine, pardie	
⁶ Thinkest	What, ween’st ⁶ thou make an idiot of our dame?	
	Now by that lord that cleped is Saint Jame,	
⁷ Furious	Thou shalt not bothe, though that thou were wood, ⁷	
	Be master of my body and of my good,	
⁸ Spite of	That one thou shalt forego maugie ⁸ thine eyen	
	What helpeth it of me to inque and spyen?	
	I trow thou wouldest lock me in thy chest	
⁹ Pleases	Thou shouldest say, “Fair wife, go where thee lest, ⁹	
	Take youn disport, I will not ’leve no tales,	5901
	I know you for a true wife, Dame Ales”	
	‘We love no man, that taketh keep or charge	
	Where that we go, we will be at our large	

Of alle men yblessed may he be	5905	
The wise astiologei Dan Ptolomy,		
That saith this proverb in his Almagest·		
“Of alle men his wisdom is highest,		
That recketh not who hath the world in hand.”		
‘By this proverb thou shalt well understand,	5910	
Have thou enough, what thai ¹ thee reck or care		¹ Needs
How meynly that other folkes faie?		
For certes, olde dotard, by you leave,		
Ye shallen have queint ight enough at eve		
He is too great a niggard that will weine ²		² Refuse
A man to light a candle at his lantéin,		
He shall have never the lesse light paidie		
Have thou enough, thee thai ³ not plamen ⁴ thee		³ Behoves ⁴ Com-plain
‘Thou sayst also, if that we make us gay		
With clothing and with precious array,	5920	
That it is peril of our chastity.		
And yet, with sorrow, thou enforcest thee,		
And sayst these wordes in the apostle’s name		
“In habit made with chastity and shame		
Ye women shall apparel you,” quod he,		
“And not in tressed hair, and gay perrie, ⁵		⁵ Precious stones
As peaules, nor with gold, nor clothes rich”		
‘After thy text, ne after thy rubric		
I will not work as muchel as a gnat		
‘Thou sayst also, I walk out like a cat;	5930	
For whoso woulde singe the catte’s skin,		
Then will the cat well dwellen in her inn, ⁶		⁶ House
And if the catte’s skin be sleek and gay,		
She will not dwellen in house half a day,		
But forth she will, ere any day be daw’d,		
To shew her skin, and go a caterwaw’d. ⁷		⁷ Caterwauling
This is to say, if I be gay, sir shrew,		
I will run out, my borel ⁸ for to shew.		⁸ Clothing

	<p> Sn olde fool, what helpeth thee to spyen ² 5939 Though thou pray Aigus with his hundred eyen To be my wardecorps,¹ as he can best, In faith he shall not keep me, but me lest ² Yet could I make his beard,³ so may I the ⁴ 'Thou sayest eke, that there be thinges three, Which thinges greatly troublen all this earth, And that no wight ne may endure the feith ⁵ O lefe⁶ su shrewe, Jesu short⁷ thy life 'Yet preacheest thou, and sayst, an hateful wife Yreckon'd is for one of these mischances Be there none othei mannei resemblances 5950 That ye may liken your parables to, But if a silly wife be one of tho ⁸ 'Thou likenest eke woman's love to hell, To barien land, where water may not dwell 'Thou likenest it also to wilde fire, The more it burneth, the more it hath desire To consume every thing, that bunt will be 'Thou sayest, nigh as womes shend⁹ a tree, Right so a wife destroyeth hei husbond, This knowen they that be to wives bond' 5960 Lordings, nigh thus, as ye have understand, Bare I stiffly mine old husbands on hand,¹⁰ That thus they saiden in thei drunkenness, And all was false, but as I took witness On Jenkin, and upon my niece also O Lord, the pain I did them, and the woe, Full guileless, by Godde's sweete pine, For as an horse, I coulde bite and whine, I coulde plan,¹¹ and I was in the guilt, Or elles oftentime I had been spilt 5970 Whoso first cometh to the mill, first grint,¹² I plained first, so was our war ystint¹³ </p>
¹ Body-guard.	
² Please	
³ Make a jest of him	
⁴ Thrive	
⁵ Fourth	
⁶ Pleasant	
⁷ Shorten	
⁸ Those	
⁹ Destroy	
¹⁰ Made them be lieve	
¹¹ Complain	
¹² Ground	
¹³ Stopped	

They were full glad to excusen them full blive ¹	5973	¹ Quickly
Of thing, the which they never agult ² their live		² Sinned
Of wenches would I bearen them on hand,		
When that for sick ³ unnethes ⁴ might they stand,		³ Sickness
Yet tickled I his hearte for that he		⁴ Scarcely
Wend ⁵ that I had of him so great chiertee ⁶		⁵ Thought
I swore that all my walking out by night		⁶ Affec- tion.
Was for to espyen wenches that he dight	5980	
Under that colour had I many a mirth		
For all such wit is given us in our birth,		
Deceite, weeping, spinning, God hath given		
To women kindly, ⁷ while that they may liven		⁷ Natur- ally
And thus of one thing I may avaunten me,		
At th' end I had the better in each degree,		
By sleight or force, or by some manner thing,		
As by continual murmur or grutching, ⁸		⁸ Com- planing
Namely a-bed, there hadden they mischance,		
There would I chide, and do them no pleasance		
I would no longer in the bed abide,	5991	
If that I felt his arm over my side,		
Till he had made his ransom unto me,		
Then would I suffer him to do his nicety ⁹		⁹ Folly
And therefore every man this tale I tell,		
Win whoso may, for all is for to sell		
With empty hand men may no hawkes lue,		
For winning would I all his lust endure,		
And maken me a feigned appetite,		
And yet in bacon had I never delight	6000	
That maked ¹⁰ me that ever I would them chide.		¹⁰ Made
For though the pope had sitten them beside,		
I would not spare them at then owen board,		
For by my truth I quitt ¹¹ them word for word		¹¹ Requit- ed
As help me very God omnipotent,		
Though I right now should make my testament,		

	I ne owe them not a word, that it n'is quit,	6007
	I brouȝt it so abouten by my wit, That they must give it up, as for the best, Or elles had we never been in rest	
¹ Furious	For though he looked as a wood ¹ lón, Yet should he fail of his conclusiún	
² Dear ³ Care	Then would I say, 'Now, goode lefe, ² take keep ³ How meekly looketh Wilken oure sheep!	
⁴ Neaier kiss	Come nei, ⁴ my spouse, and let me ba ⁵ thy cheek Ye shoulde be all patiént and meek, And have a sweete spiced conscience, Since ye so preach of Jobe's patience Suff'reth alway, since ye so well can preach,	
	And but ye do, certáin we shall you teach	6020
	That it is fan to have a wife in peace, One of us two must bowen doubteless And since a man is more reasonable Than woman is, ye musten be suff'iable.	
⁶ Murmur	What aileth you to grutchen ⁶ thus and groan? Is it for ye would have my queint alone?	
	Why take it all lo, have it every del	
⁷ Curse	Peter, I shiew ⁷ you but ye love it well For if I woulde sell my <i>belle chose</i> , I coude walk as fresh as is a rose,	6030
	But I will keep it for your owen tooth Ye be to blame, by God, I say you sooth'	
	Such manner wordes hadden we on hand. Now will I speaken of my fourth husband.	
	My fourthe husband was a revellour, This is to say, he had a paramour,	
⁸ Wanton- ness	And I was young and full of iageine, ⁸ Stubborn and strong, and jolly as a pie	
⁹ Certain- ly	Then could I dancen to an harpe smale, And sing, ywis, ⁹ as any nightingale,	6040

When I had drunk a draught of sweete wine 6041

Metellus, the foule churl, the swine,

That with a staff bereft his wife her life

For she drank wine, though I had been his wife,

Ne should he not have daunted me from drink

And after wine, of Venus most I think

For all so sike¹ as cold engend'eth hail,

A likerous mouth must have a likerous tail

In woman vinolent² is no defence,

This knowen lechers by experience

6050

But, lord Christ, when that it rememb'eth me

Upon my youth, and on my jollity,

It tickleth me about mine hearte-root,

Unto this day it doth mine hearte boot,³

That I have had my world as in my time

But age, alas! that all will envenime,⁴

Hath me bereft my beauty and my pith

Let go, farewell, the devil go therewith

The flour is gone, there n'is no more to tell,

The brian, as I best may, now must I sell,

6060

But yet to be right merry will I fond⁵

Now forth to tellen of my fourth husbond

I say, I had in hearte great despite,

That he of any othei had delight,

But he was quit,⁶ by God and by Saint Joco

I made him of the same wood a cross,

Not of my body in no foul mannée,

But certainly I made folk such cheer,

That in his owen grease I made him fly

For anger, and for very jealousy

6070

By God, in earth I was his purgatory,

For which I hope his soule be in glory.

For, God it wot, he sat full oft and sung,

* 'Saint Joco' Judocus, a saint of Ponthieu

¹ Sure

² Full of
wine

³ Help

⁴ Poison

⁵ Try.

⁶ Requited

	When that his shoe full bitterly him wrung	6074
	There was no wight, save God and he, that wist	
	In many a wise how sore that I him twist	
	He died when I came from Jerusalem,	
¹ Buried	And l'th ygiave ¹ under the 10ode-beam ²	
² Cross	All ³ is his tombe not so curious	*
³ Al- though	As was the sepulchre of him, Darius,	6080
	Which that Apelles wrought so subtly	
	It is but waste to bury them preciously	
	Let him farewell, God give his soule rest,	
	He is now in his grave and in his chest	
	Now of my fifthe husband will I tell	
	God let his soule never come in hell	
⁴ Ill tem- pered	And yet was he to me the moste shiew, ⁴	
⁵ In a row	That feel I on my ribbes all by iew, ⁵	
	And ever shall, unto mine ending day	
	But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,	6090
⁶ Flatter	And therewithal he could so well me glose, ⁶	
	When that he woulde have my <i>belle chose</i> ,	
⁷ Beaten	That though he had me bet ⁷ on every bone,	
	He coulde win again my love anon.	
⁸ Better	I trow, I love him the bet, ⁸ for he	
Sparing	Was of his love so dangerous ⁹ to me	
	We women have, if that I shall not lie,	
	In this mattér a quainte fantasy.	
	Wate, what thing we may not lightly have,	
	Thereafter will we cry all day and crave	6100
	Forbid us thing, and that desiren we;	
	Press on us fast, and thenne will we flee	
¹⁰ Mer- chan- dise	With danger uttren we all our chaffare, ¹⁰	
	Great press at market maketh deare ware,	
	And too great cheap is holden at little prise,	
	This knoweth every woman that is wise	
	My fifthe husband, God his soule bless,	

	These wormes, noi these mothes, noi these mites	
¹ Apparel	Upon my paraille ¹ fiett ² them never a del, ³	6143
² Fed	And wost ⁴ thou why ² for they were used well	
³ Whit	Now will I tellen forth what happed me.	
⁴ Knowest	I say, that in the fieldes walkod we, Till truely we had such dalliance	
⁵ Fore- sight	This clerk and I, that of my purveyance ⁵ I spake to him, and said him how that he, If I were widow, shoulde wedden me	6150
⁶ Boasting	For certainly, I say for no bobance, ⁶ Yet was I never without purveyance Of marriage, noi of othei thinges eke I hold a mouse's wit not worth a leek, That hath but one hole for to starten to, And if that faille, then is all ydo ⁷	
⁷ Done	I bare him on hand ⁸ he had enchanted me, (My dame taughte me that subtilty,)	
⁸ Made him believe	And eke I saul, I mette ⁹ of him all night, He would have slain me, as I lay upright,	6160
⁹ Dreamed	And all my bed was full of very blood, But yet I hope that ye shall do me good For blood betokenoth gold, as me was taught And all was false, I dream'd of him right naught, But as I follow'd aye my dame's loie, As well of that as of othei things more	
	But now, sn, let me see, what shall I sayn ² Aha! by God I have my tale agam When that my fowthe husband was on bier, I wept algate ¹⁰ and made a sory chere, ¹¹	6170
¹⁰ Always	As wives musten, for it is the usage,	
¹¹ Counte- nance	And with my kerchief covered my visage; But, for that I was purvey'd of a make, ¹²	
¹² Mate	I wept but small, and that I undertake ¹³	
¹³ Promise	To church was mine husband borne a-morrow	

With neighbours that for him maden sorrow,	6176	
And Jenkin, oure clerk, was one of tho ¹		¹ Those
As help me God, when that I saw him go		
After the bier, methought he had a pair		
Of legges and of feet, so clean and fair,		
That all my heart I gave unto his hold		
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,		
And I was forty, if I shall say sooth,		
But yet I had alway a colte's tooth		
Gat-toothed ² I was, and that became me wele,		² Perhaps buck- toothed
I had the print of Sante Venus' seal		
As help me God, I was a lusty one,		
And fan, and rich, and young, and well begone ³		³ In a good way
And truly, as mine husbands tolden me,		
I had the beste quent that mighte be	6190	
For certes I am all venerian		
In feeling, and my heart is martian ⁴		⁴ Under influence of Mars
Venus me gave my lust and likerousness,		
And Mars gave me my study hardiness		
Mine ascendent was Taure,* and Mars therein		
Alas, alas, that ever love was sin!		
I followed aye mine inclination		
By virtue of my constellation		
That made me that I coude not withdrau		
My chamber of Venus from a good fellaw	6200	
Yet have I Marte's mark upon my face,		
And also in another privy place		
For God so wisly ⁵ be my salvati3n,		⁵ Certainly
I loved never by no discreti3n,		
But ever followed mine appetite,		
All were he shorte, longe, black, or white,		
I took no keep, so that he liked me,		
How poor he was, ne eke of what degree		

* 'Taure' The Bull

	What should I say? but at the monthes end 6209	
¹ Civil	This jolly cleik Jenkin, that was so hend, ¹ Hath wedded me with great solemnity, And to him gave I all the land and fee, That ever was me given theretefore But afterward repented me full sore He n olde ² suffer nothing of my list ³	
² Would not	By God, he smote me ones with his fist,	
³ Phasme	For that I rent out of his book a leaf, That of the stroke mine eare wax'd all deaf Stubborn I was, as is a lioness,	
⁴ Plater	And of my tongue a very jangleiess, ⁴ And walk I would, as I had done beforin, From house to house, although he had it sworn For which he oftentimes woulde preach,	6220
⁵ Doings	And me of olde Roman gestes ⁵ teach How he, Sulpitius Gallus, left his wife, And her forsook for term of all his life, Not but for open-headed ⁶ he her say ⁷	
⁶ Bre headed	Looking out at his door upon a day	
⁷ Saw	Another Roman told he me by name, That, for his wife was at a summer game	6230
⁸ Knowing	Without his weeting, ⁸ he forsook her eke And then would he upon his Bible seek	
⁹ came	That ilke ⁹ proverb of Ecclesiast, Where he commandeth, and forbiddeth fast, Man shall not suffer his wife go roll about.	
¹⁰ Willows	Then would he say right thus withouten doubt: 'Whoso that buildeth his house all of sallows, ¹⁰ And picketh his blind horse over the fallows, And suffereth his wife to go seeken hallows, ¹¹	
¹¹ Holy places	Is worthy to be hanged on the gallows' But all for nought, I sette not an haw Of his proverbs, ne of his olde saw,	6240

Ne I would not of him corrected be
 I hate them that my vices tellen me,
 And so do more of us (God wot) than I
 This made him wood¹ with me all utterly,
 I n'olde not forbear² him in no case.

6243

¹ Furious² Would
not ab-
stain or
bear

Now will I say you sooth by Saint Thomas,
 Why that I rent out of his book a leaf,
 For which he smote me, so that I was deaf

6250

He had a book, that gladly night and day
 For his disport he would it read alway,
 He cleped it Valene, and Theophrast,
 And with that book he laugh'd alway full fast
 And eke there was a clerk sometime at Rome,
 A cardinal, that highte Saint Jerome,
 That made a book against Jovinian,
 Which book was there, and eke Tertullian,
 Chrysippus, Tirotula, and Helorse,

6260

That was abbesse not far from Paris;
 And eke the Parables³ of Solomon,
 Ovide's Art, and boundes⁴ many one,
 And alle these were bounden in one volume
 And every night and day was his custome
 (When he had leisure and vacation
 From other worldly occupation)

³ Provencals⁴ Jestis

To readen in this book of wicked wives
 He knew of them more legends and more lives,
 Than be of goode wives in the Bible

6270

For trusteth well, it is an impossible,
 That any clerk will speaken good of wives,
 (But if it be of holy saintes' lives)

Ne of none other woman never the mo
 Who painted the lion, telleth⁵ me, who?
 By God, if women hadden written stories,

⁵ Tell

* 'Ovide's Art' 'Art of Love'

<p>¹ Expense</p>	<p>As clerkes have, within then oiatounes, 6276 They would have wit of men more wickedness, Than all the mark of Adam ' may redress. The children of Mercury and of Venus Be in then working full contrarious Mercury loveth wisdom and sciēce, And Venus loveth riot and dispense ¹ And for their diverse disposition, Each falleth in othei's exaltation As thus, God wot, Mercury is desolate In Pisces, where Venus is exaltate, And Venus falleth where Mercury is raised Therefore no woman of no clerk is praised The clerk when he is old, and may nought do Of Venus' woikes not worth his old shoe, 6290</p>	
	<p>Then sitteth he down, and writeth in his dotage, That women cannot keep then marriage But now to purpose, why I tolde thee, That I was beaten for a book, paidie</p>	
	<p>² Our goodman</p>	<p>Upon a night Jenkin, that was our sunc,² Read on his book, as he sat by the fire, Of Eva first, that for her wickedness Was all mankinde brought to wretchedness, For which that Jesus Christ himself was slain, That bought us with his heate-blood again 6300</p>
		<p>Lo here express of women may ye find, That woman was the loss of all mankind</p>
		<p>Then read he me how Samson lost his heres Sleeping, his leman cut them with her shears, Through whiche treason lost he both his eyen.</p>
		<p>Then read he me, if that I shall not lien, Of Hercules, and of his Dejanne, That caused him to set himself a-fire</p>

* 'Mark of Adam' all the images of Adam—i.e., all men

Nothing foigat he the care and the woe,	6309	
That Sociates had with his wives two,		
How Xantippe cast piss upon his head		
This silly man sat still, as he were dead,		
He wiped his head, no moie duist he sayn,		
But, 'Eie the thunder stint ¹ there cometh iain'		¹ Straight way
Of Phasiphae, that was the queen of Ciete,		
Foi shiewedness ² him thought the tale sweet		² Ill nature
Fy, speak no moie (it is a grisly thing)		
Of her horrible lust and hei liking		
Of Clytemnestra foi her lechery		
That falsely made hei husband for to die,	6320	
He read it with full good devotiön		
He told me eke, for what occasiön		
Amphiöiax at Thebes lost his life		
My husband had a legend of his wife		
Eryphile, that foi an ouche ³ of gold		Clasp
Hath prively unto the Greekes told,		
Where that hei husband hid him in a place,		
Foi which he had at Thebes sorry grace		
Of Lima told he me, and of Lucie		
They bothe made then husbands foi to die,	6330	
That one foi love, that othei was foi hate		
Lima hei husband on an even late		
Enpoison'd hath, foi that she was his foe.		
Lucia likeious loved hei husband so,		
That foi he should alway upon hei think,		
She gave him such a manner ⁴ love-drink,		⁴ Sort
That he was dead eie it were by the morrow		
And thus algates ⁵ husbands hadden sorrow,		⁵ Always
Then told he me, how one Latumeus		
Complained to his fellow Arius,	6340	
That in his garden growed such a tree,		
On which he said how that his wives three		

	Hanged themselves for heates despitous	6313
¹ Dear	'O leve ¹ brothei,' quod this Aunus, 'Give me a plant of thilke blessed tice, And in my gauden planted shall it be' Of later date of wives hath he read, That some have slain their husbands in their bed, And let their lecher dight them all the night. While that the corpse lay in the floor upright	6320
	And some have driven nailes in their brian, While that they slept, and thus they have them slain Some have them given poison in their drink He spake more harm than heaute may bethink And therewithal he knew of more proverbs, Than in this world their growen grass or herbs	
² Better	'Bet ² is (quod he) thine habitation Be with a lion, or a foul dragon, Than with a woman using for to chide' 'Bet is (quod he) high in the roof abide,	6360
	Than with an angry woman down in the house, They be so wicked and contarious They haten that their husbands loven aye' He said, 'A woman cast her shame away, When she cast off her smock, and furthermo, A faue woman, but she be chaste also, Is like a gold ring in a sow's nose'	
³ Think	Who coude ween, ³ or who coude suppose The woe that in mine heart was, and the pine?	
⁴ Enu'	And when I saw he n'olde never fine ⁴	6370
⁵ Plucked	To readen on this cursed book all night, All suddenly three leaves have I plight ⁵ Out of his book, right as he read, and oke I with my fist so took him on the cheek, That in our fire he fell backward adown	

And he up start, as doth a wood hoûn,
 And with his fist he smote me on the head,
 That on the floor I lay as I were dead
 And when he saw how stille that I lay,
 He was aghast, and would have fled away,
 Till ~~the~~ the last out of my swoon I braid,¹
 'Oh, hast thou slain me, false thief?' I said,
 'And for my land thus hast thou murder'd
 me?'

6376

¹ Wo'le

Ere I be dead, yet will I kissen thee'
 And near he came, and kneeled fan adown,
 And saide, 'Deare sister Alisoun,
 As help me God I shall thee never smite
 That I have done it is thyself to wite,²
 Forgive it me, and that I thee beseeke'
 And yet oftsoons I hit him on the cheek,
 And saide, 'Thief, thus much am I awikeke³
 Now will I die, I may no longer speak'

6390

² Blame³ Avenged

But at the last, with muchel care and woo
 We fell accorded⁴ by ourselven two
 He gave me all the biddle in mine hand
 To have the governance of house and land,
 And of his tongue, and of his hand also,
 And made him burn his book anon ight tho⁵

⁴ Agreed⁵ Then

And when that I had gotten unto me
 By mast'ry all the sovereignty,
 And that he said, 'Mine owen true wife,
 Do as thee list, the term of all thy life,
 Keep thine honou, and keep eke mine estate,'
 After that day we never had debate
 God help me so, I was to him as kind,
 As any wife from Denmark unto Ind,
 And also true, and so was he to me
 I pray to God that sit in majesty

6400

So bless his soule, for his mercy deai
Now will I say my tale, if ye will hear

6109

The Friar laugh'd when he had heard all this
'Now Dame,' quod he, 'so have I joy and bliss,
This is a long preamble of a tale'

¹ Speak

And when the Sompnou heard the Friar gale,¹
'Lo (quod this Sompnou) Godde's aimes two,

² Interpose

A friar will entermete² him evermo

Lo, goode men, a fly and eke a ficie

Will fall in every dish and eke mattere

³ Preamble

What speakest thou of preambulatioun?³

What? amble or trot, or peace, or go sit down

⁴ Hinder
est

Thou lettest⁴ ou dispoit in this mattere'

6121

'Yea, wilt thou so, Sir Sompnou?' quod the
Ficie,

'Now by my faith I shall, eie that I go,

Tell of a Sompnou such a tale or two,

That all the folk shall laughen in this place'

⁵ Chuse

'Now elles, Friar, I will beshew⁵ thy face,

(Quod this Sompnou) and I beshewe me,

But if I telle tales two or threo

Of friars, eie I come to Sidenborne,

That I shall make thine hearte for to moun

6130

For well I wot thy patience is gone'

Our Hoste cried, 'Peace, and that anon,'

And saide, 'Let the woman tell hei tale.

Ye fare as folk that drunken be of ale

Do, Dame, tell forth your tale, and that is best'

⁶ Please

'All ready, sir,' quod she, 'right as you lest,⁶

If I have licence of this worthy Frere'

'Yes, Dame,' quod he, 'tell forth, and I will heai.'

THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

IN olde dayes of the king Artóu, 6439

Of which that Butons speaken great honóu,

All was this land fulfill'd of faéie,

The Elf-queen, with her jolly company,

Danced full oft in many a greene mead

This was the old opinion as I read,

I speak of many hundred years ago,

But now can no man see none elves mo,

For now the greate charity and prayéis

Of limiters¹ and othei holy feries,

That searchen every land and every stream,

As thick as motes in the sunne-beam, 6450

Blessing halls, chambers, kitchens, and boweis,

Cities and boughs, castles high and towers,

Thorpes² and baines, shepens³ and daunes,

This maketh that there be no faeries

For there⁴ as wont to walken was an elf,

There walketh now the limiter himself,

In undermeales⁵ and in morrownings,

And saith his matins and his holy things,

As he go'th in his limitatioun,⁶

Women may now go safely up and down, 6460

In every bush, and under every tree,

There is none othei incubus but he,

And he ne will do them no dishonour

And so befell it, that this king Artóu

Had in his house a lusty bachelor,

That on a day came riding from rivér

And happed, that, alone as she was boine,

He saw a maiden walking him befoine,

¹ Begging
fairs

² Villages
³ Stables

⁴ Where

⁵ Dinner-
time

⁶ Begging
district

¹ Spite of	Of which maid he anon, maugre ¹ hei head, By very force bereft her maidenhead For which oppressioun was such clamour, And such pursunt unto the king Artour, That damned was this knight for to be dead By course of law, and should have lost his head,	6460
² Then	(Paraventure such was the statute tho, ²) But that the queen and other ladies mo So longe prayeden the king of grace, Till he his life him granted in the place, And gave him to the queen, all at her will	
³ Execute	To choose whethér she would him save or spill ³ The queene thank'th the king with all hei might, And after this thus spake she to the knight, When that she saw hei time upon a day 'Thou standest yet (quod she) in such array, That of thy life yet hast thou no surety, I grant thee life, if thou canst tellen me, What thing is it that women most desien Beware, and keep thy necke-bone from iron. And if thou canst not tell it me anon, Yet will I give thee leave for to gon	6480
⁴ Learn	A twelvemonth and a day, to seek and leie ⁴	6490
⁵ Satisfac- tory ⁶ Go	An answer suffisant ⁵ in this matter And surety will I have, ere that thou pace, ⁶ Thy body for to yelden in this place'	
⁷ Sigheth	Woe was the knight, and sorrowfully he siketh, ⁷ But what? he may not do all as him liketh	
⁸ Depart	And at the last he chose him for to wend, ⁸ And come again right at the yeare's end With such answer, as God would him purvey And tak'th his leave, and wendeth forth his way He seeketh every house and every place, Where as he hopeth for to finden grace,	6501

To leannen what thing women loven most	6503	
But he ne could ariven in no coast,		
Where as he mighte find in this matiere		
Two créatures accordig in feie ¹		¹ Agreeng together
Some saiden, women loven best richéss,		
Some saiden honouir, some saiden jolliness,		
Some rich array, some saiden lust a-bed,		
And oft time to be widow and to be wed	6510	
Some saiden, that we be in heart most eased		
When that we be yflater'd and ypraised		
He go'th full nigh the sooth, I will not he,		
A man shall win us best with flattery,		
And with attendance, and with business		
Be we ylmmed ² bothe more and less		² Caught
And some men saiden, that we loven best		
For to be free, and do nigh as us lest, ³		³ Please
And that no man reprove us of our vice,		
But say that we be wise, and nothing nice	6520	
For truly there n'is none of us all,		
If any wight will claw us on the gall, ⁴		⁴ Fitt the soic
That we n'ill ⁵ kick, for that he saith us sooth		⁵ Will not
Assay, ⁶ and he shall find it, that so do'th		⁶ Thy
For be we never so vicious within,		
We will be holden wise and clean of sin		
And some saiden, that great delight have we		
For to be holden stable and eke secré,		
And in one purpose steadfastly to dwell,		
And not bewrayen thing that men us tell	6530	
But that tale is not worth a iake-stele ⁷		⁷ Handle of iake
Paide, we women kannen nothing hele, ⁸		⁸ Conceal
Witness on Mida, will ye heai the tale?		
Ovid, amonges other thinges smale,		
Said, Mida had under his longe hores		
Growing upon his head two ass's eais,		

The whiche vice he hid, as he best might, 653,
 Full subtilly from every manne's sight,
 That, save his wife, there wist of it no mo,
 He loved her most, and trusted her also,
 He prayed her, that to no creature
 She n'olde tellen of his disfigure

She swore him, nay, for all the world to win,
 She n'olde do that villany, nor sin,
 To make her husband have so foul a name
 She n'old not tell it for her owen shame
 But natheless her thoughte that she did,
 That she so longe should a counsel hide,
 Her thought it swell so sore about her heart,
 That needely some word her must astart, 6550
 And since she durst not tell it to no man,
 Down to a marais¹ faste by she ran,

¹ Mar-ly

² Make a
humming
noise

Till she came there, her hearte was a-fire
 And as a bitterin bumbleth² in the mie,
 She laid her mouth unto the water down
 'Bewray me not, thou water, with thy soun,'
 Quod she, 'to thee I tell it, and no mo,
 Mine husband hath long ass's eares two
 Now is mine heart all whole, now is it out,
 I might no longer keep it out of doubt' 6560
 Here may ye see, though we a time abide,
 Yet out it must, we can no counsel hide
 The remnant of the tale, if ye will hear,
 Readeth Ovid, and there ye may it lere³

³ Learn

This knight, of which my tale is specially,
 When that he saw he might not come thereby,
 (This is to say, what women loven most,)
 Within his breast full sorrowful was his ghost
 But home he go'th, he mighte not sojourn,
 The day was come, that homeward must he turn

And in his way, it happen'd him to ride	6571	
In all his care, under a forest side,		
Whereas he saw upon a dance go		
Of ladies four-and-twenty and yet mo ¹		¹ More
Toward this ilke dance he drew full yern, ²		² Eagerly
In hope that he some wisdom shoulde learn,		
But certainly, ere he came fully there,		
Yvanish'd was this dance, he n'ist not ³ where,		³ Knew not
No creature saw he that bare life,		
Save on the green he saw sitting a wife,	6580	
A fouler wight there may no man devise		
Agan ⁴ this knight this old wife 'gan arise,		⁴ Toward
And said, 'Su Knight, here forth ne li'th no way		
Tell me what that ye seekon by your fay ⁵		⁵ Faith
Paraventure it may the better be		
These olde folk con ⁶ muchel thing,' quod she		⁶ Know
'My leve ⁷ mothei,' quod this knight, 'certain,		⁷ Dear
I n'am but dead, but if that I can sayn,		
What thing it is that women most desue	6589	
Could ye me wiss, ⁸ I would quit well your hne'		⁸ Instruct
'Plight me thy truth here in mine hand,' quod she,		
'The nexte thing that I require of thee		
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might,		
And I will tell it you ere it be night'		
'Have here my truthe,' quod the knight, 'I grant'		
'Thenne,' quod she, 'I dare me well avaunt,		
Thy life is safe, for I will stand thereby,		
Upon my life the queen will say as I		
Let see, which is the proudest of them all,		
That weareth on a kerchief or a caul,	6600	
That dare say nay of that I shall you teach		
Let us go forth withouten longer speech'		

	Then ȝowned she a pistel * in his ear,	6603
	And bade him to be glad, and have no fear	
'Promised	When they been comen to the court, this knight	
	Said, he had held his day, as he had light, ¹	
	And ready was his answer, as he said	
	Full many a noble wife, and many a maid,	
	And many a widow, for that they been wise,	
	(The queen herself sitting as a justice,)	6610
	Assembled been, his answer for to hear,	
	And afterward this knight was bid appear	
	To every wight commanded was silence,	
	And that the knight should tell in audience,	
What thing that worldly women loven best		
This knight ne stood not still, as doth a beast,		
But to this question anon answer'd		
With manly voice, that all the court it heard,		
'My hege lady, generally,' quod he,		
'Women desuen to have sovereignty,	6620	
As well over then husband as then love,		
And for to be in mast'ry him above		
This is your most desue, though ye me kill,		
Do as you list, I am here at your will'		
In all the court ne was there wife nor maid,		
Nor widow, that contrained that he said,		
But said, he was worthy to have his life		
And with that word up start this olde wife,		
Which that the knight saw sitting on the green		
'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereign lady queen,	6630	
Ere that your court depart, as do me right		
I taughte this answer unto this knight,		
For which he plighted me his truthe there,		
The firste thing I would of him requere,		
He would it do, if it lay in his might		

* 'Rowned she a pistel' Whisped a short speech or les on

Before this count then pray I thee, Sir Knight,
 Quod she, 'that thou me take unto thy wife, 6637
 For well thou wo'st,¹ that I have kept thy life
 If I say false, say nay upon thy fay'

¹ Wottest,
 knowest

This knight answer'd, 'Alas and wala wa'
 I wot ight well that such was my behest²
 For Godde's love as choose a new request:
 Take all my good, and let my body go'

² Promise.

'Nay, thcn,' quod she, 'I shrew³ us bothe two,
 For though that I be olde, foul, and pore,⁴

³ Curse

⁴ Poor

I n'old for all the metal nor the ore,
 That under earth is grave,⁵ or h'th above,
 But if thy wife I weie and eke thy love'

⁵ Buried

'My love?' quod he, 'nay, my damnatión
 Alas! that any of my nation

6650

Should ever so foul disparaged be'
 But all for nought, the end is this, that he
 Constrained was, he needes must her wed,
 And tak'th this olde wife, and go'th to bed

Now, woulde some men say paráventure,
 That for my neghgence I do no cure⁶
 To tellen you the joy and all th' array,
 That at the feaste was that ilke⁷ day

⁶ Take no
 pains

⁷ Same

To which thing shortly answeren I shall.

I say there was no joy nor feast at all,
 There n'as⁸ but heaviness and muchel sorrow
 For prively he wedded her on the mor ow,
 And all day after hid him as an owl

6660

⁸ Was not.

So woe was him, his wife looked so ul

Great was the woe the knight b in his thought
 When he was with his wife a-be ought,
 He walloweth, and he turneth f fio

This olde wife lay smiling e
 And said, 'O deare husband, uite,

¹ Fastidious	<p>Faireth every knight thus with his wife as ye ? 6670 Is this the law of king Artour's house ? Is every knight of his thus dangerous ?¹ I am your owen love, and eke your wife, I am she, which that saved hath your life, And certes yet did I you never unright Why fare ye thus with me this firste night ? Ye faien like a man had lost his wit. What is my guilt ? for Godde's love tell it, And it shall be amended, if I may'</p>
² Burst	<p>'Amended !' quod this knight, 'alas' nay, nay, It will not be amended never mo , 6681 Thou art so loathly, and so old also, And thereto comen of so low a kind, That little wonder is though I wallow and wind , So woulde God, mine hearte woulde brest '² 'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your uniest ?' 'Yea, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder is' 'Now, Sir,' quod she, 'I could amend all this, If that me list, ere it were dayes thre, So well ye mighten bear you unto me * 6690 'But for ye spoken of such gentleness, As is descended out of old richness, That therefore shallen ye be gentlemen ; Such arrogance n'is not worth an hen</p>
³ Open	<p>'Look who that is most virtuous alway, Privy and apert,³ and most intendeth aye To do the gentle deedes that he can, And take him for the greatest gentleman. Christ will⁴ we claim of him our gentleness, Not of our elders⁵ for their old richness 6701 For though they gave us all their heitage,</p>
⁴ Wills, requires ⁵ Ancestors	<p>* 'So well ye mighten bear you unto me ' If so be that you could conduc yourself well towards me</p>

For which we claim to be of high paráge, ¹	6702	¹ Parentage
Yet may they not bequeathen, for no thing,		
To none of us, their virtuous living,		
That made them gentlemen called to be,		
And bade us follow them in such degree		
‘Well can the wise poet of Florence,		
That highte Dant’, spoken of this sentence		
Lo, in such maner rhyme is Dante’s tale		
‘Full seld’ upiseth by his branches smale	6710	
Prowess of man, for God of his goodness		
Wills that we claim of him our gentleness .		
For of our elders may we nothing claim		
But temporal thing, that man may hurt and maim		
‘Eke every wight wot this as well as I,		
If gentleness were planted naturally		
Unto a certain lin’age down the line,		
Privý and apért, ² then would they never fine ³		² Open
To do of gentleness the fair office,		³ End, cense
They mighten ⁴ do no villany or vice	6720	⁴ Would be able
‘Take fire, and bear it into the darkest house		
Betwixt this and the mount of Caucasus,		
And let men shut the doores, and go thenne, ⁵		⁵ Thence
Yet will the fire as faire lie and bienne ⁶		⁶ Burn
As twenty thousand men might it behold,		
His office natural aye will it hold,		
Up ⁷ peril of my life, till that it die.		⁷ Upon
‘Here may ye see well, how that gentery ⁸		⁸ Gentility
Is not annexed to possession,		
Since folk ne do then operation	6730	
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind		
For God it wot, men may full often find		
A lorde’s son do shame and villany		
And he that will have price ⁹ of his gently,		⁹ Reward
For ¹⁰ he was boren of a gentle house,		¹⁰ Because.

	And had his eldeis noble and virtuous, And n'll himselven do no gentle deedes, Ne follow his gentle ancestiȝ, that dead is, He n'is not gentle, be he duke or carl, Foi villan's sinful doedes make a choil. ¹ Foi gentleness n'is but the renomee ² Of thine ancéstois, foi then high bounty, Which is a strange thing to thy persón Thy gentleness cométh from God alone Then cometh ouȝ very gentleness of grace, It was no thing bequeath'd us with ouȝ place. 'Thinketh how noble, as saith Valerius, Was thilke ³ Tullius Hostilius, That out of povert' rose to high nobless Readeth Senec, and readeth eke Boece, There shall ye see express, that it no diede ⁴ is, That he is gentle that doth gentle deedes And therefore, leve ⁵ husbánd, I thus conclude, All be it that mine ancestois were rude, Yet may the highe God, and so hope I, Granten me grace to liven virtuously. Then am I gentle, when that I begin To liven virtuously, and warven ⁶ sin 'And there as ye of povert' me reprove, The highe God, on whom that we believe, In wilful povert' chose to lead his life And certes, every man, maiden, or wife, May understand, that Jesus heaven king Ne would not choose a vicióus living 'Glad povert' is an honest thing certain; This will Senec and other cleikes sayn Whoso that halt him paid* of his povéit', I hold him rich, all had he not a sheit	673 6750 676r
¹ Churl		
Renown		
³ That same		
⁴ Doubt		
⁵ Dear		
⁶ Forsake		

* 'Halt him paid' Holds him satisfied, is content

He that covéteth is a pooie wight,	6769	
For he would have that is not in his might.		
But he that nought hath, ne coveteth t' have,		
Is rich, although ye hold him but a knave.		
Very povéit' is sinne properly		
'Juvenal saith of povert' meynly -		
The pooie man when he goth by the way,		
Before the thieves he may sing and play		
Povéit' is hateful good, and, as I guess,		
A full great binger out of business, ¹		¹ Turmoul
A great amender eke of sapience		
To him, that taketh it in patiéce	6780	
Povert' is this, although it seem elenge, ²		² Strange
Possession that no wight will challenge		
Povert' full often, when a man is low,		
Maketh his God and eke himself to know		
Povert' a spectacle is, as thinketh me,		
Through which he may his very friendes see		
And, therefore, Sir, since that I you not grieve,		
Of my povert' no more me reprieve		
'Now, Sir, of eld, ³ that ye reprovén me .		³ Age
And certes, Sir, though none authority	6790	
We're in no book, ye gentles of honour		
Say, that men should an olde wight honour,		
And clepe ⁴ him father, for your gentleness,		⁴ Call
And authois shall I finden, as I guess		
'Now there ye say that I am foul and old,		
Then dicad ye not to be a cokewold		
For filth, and eld also, so may I the, ⁵		⁵ Thive
Be greate wardens upon chastity		
But natholess, since I know your delight,		
I shall fulfil your worldly appetite	6800	
'Choose now,' quod she, 'one of these thinges tway,		
To have me foul and old till that I dey, ⁶		⁶ Die.

	And be to you a true humble wife,	6803
	And never you displease in all my life ·	
	Or elles will ye have me young and fan,	
¹ Resort	And take your aventure of the repaun, ¹	
	That shall be to your house because of me,	
	Or in some other place it may well be ?	
	Now choose yourselven whether that you liketh ·	
- Con- siders	This knight aviseth ² him, and sore siketh, ³	6810
⁴ Sigheth	But at the last he said in this mannée ,	
	‘ My lady and my love, and wife so dear,	
	I put me in your wise goveinance,	
	Chooseth yourself which may be most pleasance	
	And most honóur to you and me also,	
⁴ I care not	I do no force ⁴ the whether of the two	
	For as you liketh, it sufficeth me ·	
	‘ Then have I got the mastery,’ quod she,	
⁵ Pleases	‘ Since I may choose and govern as me lest ’ ⁵	
	‘ Yea certes, wife,’ quod he, ‘ I hold it best ’	6820
	‘ Kiss me,’ quod she, ‘ we be no longer wroth,	
	For by my truth I will be to you both,	
	This is to say, yea, bothe fair and good	
⁶ Die	I pray to God that I may steiven ⁶ wood, ⁷	
⁷ Mad	But ⁸ I to you be all so good and true,	
⁸ Unless	As ever was wife, since that the world was new;	
	And but I be to-morrow as fair to seen,	
	As any lady, emperess, or queen,	
	That is betwixt the East and eke the West,	
	Do with my life and death right as you lest	6830
	Cast up the curtain, look how that it is ·	
	And when the knight saw verily all this,	
	That she so fair was, and so young thereto,	
⁹ Took	For joy he hent ⁹ hei in his armes two :	
	His hearte bathéd in a bath of bliss,	
¹⁰ In turn.	A thousand times a-row ¹⁰ he ‘gan her kiss :	

And she obeyed him in every thing,
That mighte do him pleasance or liking
And thus they live unto their lives' end
In perfect joy, and Jesu Christ us send
Husbandes meek and young, and fiesh a-bed,
And grace to overlive them that we wed

6837

And eke I pray Jesus to short their lives,
That will not be govérned by their wives.
And old and angry niggards of dispense,
God send them soon a very pestilence.

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.

	THIS worthy limiter, this noble Fiere,	6847
¹ Sort of	He made alway a manner ¹ louring chere ²	
² Look	Upon the Som'nour, but for honesty ³	
³ Good	No villan's word ⁴ as yet to him spake he.	
manners	But at the last he said unto the wife;	
⁴ Low bred	'Dame, (quod he,) God give you ight good life,	
word	Ye have here touched, all so may I the, ⁵	
⁵ Thrive	In school matter a full great difficulty	
	Ye have said muchel thing ight well, I say.	
	But, Dame, here as we riden by the way,	
	Us needeth not to speaken but of game,	
⁶ Leave	And let ⁶ authorities, in Godde's name,	
	'To preaching, and to school eke of cleigy.	
	'But if it like unto this company,	6860
	I will you of a Som'nour tell a game,	
⁷ A petty	Pardie, ⁷ ye may well knowen by the name,	
oath.	That of a Som'nour may no good be said,	
⁸ Satisfied	I pray that none of you be evil apaid, ⁸	
	A Som'nour is a runner up and down	
⁹ Mandates.	With mandements ⁹ for fornicacioun,	
	And is ybeat at every towne's end'	
¹⁰ Civil	Then spake our Host, 'Ah, Sir, ye should be hend ¹⁰	
	And courteous, as a man of your estate,	

In company we will have no debate	6870	
Telleth your tale, and let the Som'nour be'		
'Nay,' quod the Som'nour, 'let him say by me		
What so him list, when it cometh to my lot,		
By God I shall him quiten every groat		
I shall him tellen what a great honour		
It is to be a flattering limitour,		
And eke of many another manner ¹ crime,		¹ Sort of
Which needeth not rehearsed at this time,		
And his office I shall him tell ywis ²		² Assured-ly
Our Hoste answer'd, 'Peace, no more of this'	6880	
And afterwaerd he said unto the Fiere,		
'Tell forth your tale, mine owen master dear'		

THE FRIAR'S TALE

Whilom there was dwelling in my country		
An archdeacon, a man of high degree,		
That boldely did executioun,		
In punishing of fornicatioun,		
Of witchecraft, and eke of baudery,		
Of defamation, and avoutery, ³		³ Adultery
Of churche-reeves, ⁴ and of testaments,		⁴ Church-wardens
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments,	6890	
Of usure, and of simony also,		
But certes lechers did he greatest woe;		
They shoulde singen, if that they were hent, ⁵		⁵ Caught
And smalle tithes weren foul yshent, ⁶		⁶ Damaged
If any person would upon them plain, ⁷		⁷ Complain
There might astent them no pecunial pain.*		
For smalle tithes, and small offering,		

* 'No pecunial pain' They were released from no pecuniary trouble

	<p>He made the people piteously to sing , 6898 For eie the bishop hent them with his crook They weren in the archedeacon's book , Then had he through his jurisdiction Power to do on them correction He had a Som'nour ready to his hand, A shier boy was none in Engleland; For subtilly he had his espialle,¹ That taught him well where it might ought avail He coude spare of lechers one or two, To teachen him to foui and twenty mo For though this Som'nour wood² be as an hare, To tell his harlotry I will not spare, 6910 For we be out of their correction, They have of us no jurisdiction, Ne never shall have, term of all their lives 'Peter, so be the women of the stives,'³ Quod this Som'nour, 'yput out of our cure'⁴ 'Peace, with mischance and with misaventure,' Our Hoste said, 'and let him tell his tale Now telleth forth, and let the Som'nour gale,⁵ Ne spareth not, mine owen master deai' This false thief, this Som'nour, (quod the Frere,) Had alway baudes ready to his hand, 6921 As any hawk to lure in Engleland, That told him all the secrets that they knew, For their acquaintance was not come of new, They weren his approvers prively He took himself a great profit thereby His master knew not alway what he wan. Withouten mandement,⁶ a lewed⁷ man He coude summon, up pain of Chuste's curse, And they were inly glad to fill his purse, 6930 And maken him great feastes at the nale⁸</p>
¹ Espion- age	
² Wild	
³ Stews	
⁴ Care	
⁵ Whistle	
⁶ Mandate ⁷ Ignorant	
⁸ Ale- house	

And ight as Judas hadde purses smale ¹	6932	¹ Small
And was a thief, ight such a thief was he,		
His master had but half his duety		
He was (if I shall given him his laud)		
A thief, and eke a Som'nour, and a baud		
He had eke wenches at his retinue,		
That whethet that Sir Robert or Sir Hugh,		
Or Jack, or Ralph, or whoso that it were		
That lay by them, they told it in his ear	6940	
Thus was the wench and he of one assent,		
And he would fetch a feigned mandement,		
And summon them to the chapter bothe two,		
And pill ² the man, and let the wenche go		² Rob
Then would he say, 'Friend, I shall for thy sake		
Do ³ strike thee out of oure letters blake, ⁴		³ Cause
Thee that ⁵ no more as in this case travail;		⁴ Black.
I am thy friend there I may thee avail'		⁵ Behov- eth
Certain he knew of biberies many mo,		
Than possible is to tell in yeares two	6950	
For in this world n'is dogge for the bow,		
That can an hurt deer from an whole yknow,		
Bet ⁶ than this Som'nour knew a sly lechour,		⁶ Better
Or an avoutrei, or a paramour		
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,		
Therefore on it he set all his intent		
And so befell, that ones on a day		
This Som'nour, waiting ever on his prey,		
Rode forth to summon a widow, an old ribbe,*		
Feigning a cause, for he would have a ribbe.	6960	
And happed that he saw before him ride		
A gay yeoman under a forest side		
A bow he bare, and arrows bright and keen,		

* 'Ribbe' Musical instrument, supposed to be applied to an old woman on account of its shrillness.

¹ Short
coat

He had upon a countep¹ of green, 6964
An hat upon his head with finges blake.

² Well
over-
taken

‘Sn,’ quod this Som’nou, ‘hail, and well atake’²

³ Shade of
trees

‘Welcome,’ quod he, ‘and every good fellaw,

Whither uest thou under this green shaw?’³

Saude this yeoman, ‘wilt thou fai to-day?’

This Som’nou him answe^r’d, and saide, ‘Nay

Here faste by,’ quod he, ‘is mine intent 6971

To iden, for to raisen up a rent,

That ’longeth to my loide’s duety’

‘Ah! art thou then a bailff?’ ‘Yea,’ quod he

(He durste not for very filth and shame’

Say that he was a Som’nour, for the name)

⁴ Dear

‘*De par dieux*,’ quod this yeoman, ‘leve⁴ brother,

Thou art a bailff, and I am another

I am unknowen, as in this country

Of thine acquaintance I will prayen thee, 6980

And eke of brotherhood, if that thee list

I have gold and silver lying in my chest,

If that thee hap to come into our shue,

All shall be thine, ight as thou wilt desire’

‘*Grand mercy*,’ quod this Som’nou, ‘by my
faith’

Evereach in other’s hand his truthe lay’th,

⁵ Die

For to be swoine biethren till they dey⁵

In dalliance they riden forth and play

⁶ Chatter
ing

This Som’nour, which that was as full of jangles,⁶

⁷ A bird of
prey

As full of venom he these wanangles,⁷ 6990

And ever inquiring upon every thing,

‘Brother,’ quod he, ‘where is now your dwelling,

⁸ Seek.

Another day if that I should you seech?’⁸

This yeoman him answe^r’d in softe speech,

‘Brother,’ quod he, ‘fai in the North country,

Whereas I hope some time I shall thee see

Ere we depart I shall thee so well wiss, ¹	6997	¹ Inform
That of mine house ne shalt thou never miss'		
'Now, brother,' quod this Som'nour, 'I you pray,		
Teach me, while that we riden by the way,		
(Since that ye be a bailiff as am I,)		
Some subtilty, and tell me faithfully		
In mine office how I may moste win		
And spareth ² not for conscience or for sin,		² Spare
But, as my brother, tell me how do ye'		
'Now by my truthe, brother mine,' said he,		
'As I shall tellen thee a faithful tale		
My wages be full strait and eke full smale,		
My lord is hard to me and dangerous, ³		³ Difficult,
And mine office is full laborious,	7010	sparing
And therefore by extortion I live,		
Forsooth I take all that men will me give.		
Algates ⁴ by sleighte or by violence		⁴ However
From year to year I win all my dispense;		
I can no better tellen faithfully'		
'Now certes,' quod this Som'nour, 'so fare I,		
I spare not to taken, God it wot,		
But if it be too heavy or too hot		
What I may get in counsel privily,		
No mannei conscience of that have I	7020	
N'ere ⁵ mine extortion, I might not liven,		⁵ Were it
Ne of such japes ⁶ will I not be shriven ⁷		not
Stomach nor conscience know I none,		⁶ Tricks
I shiew ⁸ these shifte-fathers ⁹ evereach one.		⁷ Confess-
Well be we met, by God and by Saint Jame.		ed
But, leve brother, tell me then thy name,'		⁸ Curse
Quod this Som'nour Right in this meane while		⁹ Con-
This yeoman 'gan a little for to smile		fessors.
'Brother,' quod he, 'wilt thou that I thee tell?		
I am a fiend, my dwelling is in hell,	7030	

	And here I nide about my purchasing,	7031
¹ Whether	To wot whei ¹ men will give me any thing My purchase is th' effect of all my rent Look how thou nidest for the same intent To winnen good, thou reckest never how, Right so faie I, for niden will I now Unto the world's ende for a prey' 'Ah,' quod this Som'nour, ' <i>benedicite</i> ' what say ye? I ween'd ye were a yeoman truly. Ye have a manne's shape as well as I	7040
	Have ye then a figúe determinate In helle, there ye be in your estate?' 'Nay certainly,' quod he, 'there have we none, But when us liketh we can take us one Or elles make you wcen that we be shape Sometime like a man, or like an ape, Or like an angel can I nide or go, It is no wonder thing though it be so, A lousy juggler can deceiven thee,	
² Know	And paidie yet can ² I more craft than he'	7050
	'Why,' quod the Som'nour, 'nide ye then or gon In sundy shape, and not alway in one?' 'For we,' quod he, 'will us such forme make, As most is able our preye for to take' 'What maketh you to have all this labou?' 'Full many a cause, leve Su Som'nour,' Saide this fiend 'But alle thing hath time, The day is short, and it is passed prime, And yet ne won I nothing in this day,	
³ Apply	I will intend ³ to winning, if I may, And not intend our thinges to declare For, brothei mine, thy wit is all too bare To understand, although I told them thee.	7060
⁴ Because	But for ⁴ thou askest, why labouen we	

Fo ¹ sometimes we be Godde's instruments,	7065	¹ Because
And meanes to do his commandements,		
When that him list, upon his créatures,		
In divers acts and in diuérse figures		
Withouten him we have no might certain,		
If that him list to standen thereagain ²	7070	² Against it
And sometimes at our prayer have we leave,		
Only the body, and not the soul to grieve		
Witness on Job, whom that we didn ³ woe		³ Caused ^a
And sometimes have we might on bothe two,		
This is to say, on soul and body eke ⁴		⁴ Also
And sometimes be we suffer'd for to seek		
Upon a man, and do his soul unrest		
And not his body, and all is for the best		
When he withstandeth our temptatió,		
It is a cause of his salvatió,	7080	
All be it that it was not our intent		
He should be safe, but that we would him hent ⁵		⁵ Catch
And sometimes be we servants unto man,		
As to the archebishop Saint Dunstan,		
And to the apostle servant eke was I'		
'Yet tell me,' quod this Som'now, 'faithfully,		
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway		
Of elements?' The fiend answered, 'Nay		
Sometimes we feign, and sometimes we arise		
With deade bodies, in full sundry wise,	7090	
And speak as reasonably, ⁶ and fair, and well,		⁶ Reason- ably
As to the Pythoness did Samuel		
And yet will some men say it was not he.		
I do no force ⁷ of your divinity		⁷ I heed not
But one thing warn I thee, I will not jape, ⁸		⁸ Jest
Thou wilt algates ⁹ weet ¹⁰ how we be shape		⁹ Never theless
Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dear,		¹⁰ Know
Come, where thee needeth not of me to lea, ¹¹		¹¹ Learn

	Foī thou shalt by thine own experieunce	7099
¹ Learn	Conne ¹ in a chaīer red of this sentence,	
² Better	Bet ² than Vngile, while he was on live,	
³ Briskly	Or Dant' also Now let us īden blive, ³	
	For I will holden company with thee,	
	Till it be so that thou forsake me'	
	'Nay,' quod this Som'nour, 'that shall ne'er betide	
	I am a yeoman, knowen is full wide,	
	My tūtthe will I hold, as in this case,	
	Foī though thou were the devil Sathanas,	
	My tūtthe will I hold to thee, my brother,	
	As I have swoīn, and each of us to other,	7110
	For to be true brethien in this case,	
	And both we go abouten ouī purchāse	
	Take thou thy part, what that men will thee give,	
	And I shall mine, thus may we bothe live	
	And if that any of us have more than other,	
	Let him be true, and part it with his brother'	
	'I grante,' quod the devil, 'by my fay'	
	And with that word they īden forth then way,	
	And right at ent'ring of the towne's end,	
⁴ Prepared	To which this Som'nour shope ⁴ him for to wend,	7120
	They saw a cart, that charged was with hay,	
	Which that a carter dīove forth on his way	
	Deep was the way, foī which the carte stood.	
⁵ Mad	The carter smote, and eried as he were wood, ⁵	
	'Heit Scot! heit Brok! what, spare ye foī the stones?'	
	The fiend (quod he) you fetchē body and bones,	
	As farforthly as ever ye were foal'd,	
⁶ Suffered.	So muchel woe as I have with you tholed ⁶	7128
	The devil have all, both hoīse, and cart, and hay'	
	The Som'nour said, 'Hōīe shall we have a pīcy,'	
	And near the fiend he drew, as nought'ne wore,*	
	* 'Nought ne were' Nothing were the matter	

Full privily, and 1ouned ¹ in his ear	7132	¹ Whis- per- ed
'Hearken, my brother, hearken, by thy faith, Hearest thou not, how that the carter saith? Hent ² it anon, for he hath given it thee, Both hay and cart, and eke his caples ³ three.'		² Lay hold of ³ Horses
'Nay,' quod the devil, 'God wot, never a del, ⁴ It is not his intent, trust thou me well, Ask him thyself, if thou not tiowest ⁵ me, Or elles stint ⁶ a while and thou shalt see'	7140	⁴ Whit ⁵ Believeest ⁶ Stop
This carter thwacketh his horse upon the croup, And they began to drawen and to stoop 'Hert now,' quod he, 'there, Jesu Christ you bless, And all his hande's work, both more and less' That was well twight, ⁷ mine owen laird ⁸ boy, I pray God save thy body and Saint Eloy Now is my cart out of the slough paidie'		 ⁷ Pulled ⁸ Gray
'Lo, brother,' quod the fiend, 'what told I thee? Here may ye see, mine owen dear brother, The chuil spake one thing, but he thought another Let us go forth abouten our viage, ⁹ Here win I nothing upon this carriage	7151	⁹ Journey
When that they comen somewhat out of town, This Som'nour to his brother 'gan to 1oun, 'Brother,' quod he, 'here wonneth an old 1ebeck, That had almost as lief to lose her neck, As for to give a penny of her good I will have twelve pence though that she be wood, ¹⁰ Or I will summon her to our office, And yet, God wot, of her know I no vice But for thou canst not, as in this country, Winnen thy cost, take here example of me.'	7160	¹⁰ Mad
This Som'nour clappeth at the widow's gate, 'Come out,' he said, 'thou olde very triate, ¹¹ I trow thou hast some friar or priest with thee.'		¹¹ Term for an old woman

	<p>‘Who clappeth?’ said this wife, ‘<i>benedicite</i>, God save you, Sn, what is your sweete will?’</p>	7166
1 Upon	<p>‘I have,’ quod he, ‘of summons here a bill. Up¹ pain of cursing, looke that thou be To-morrow before the archedeacon’s knce, To answer to the count, of certain things’</p>	
2 Surely	<p>‘Now lord,’ quod she, ‘Christ Jesu, king of kings. So wisly² helpe me, as I ne may³</p>	
3 Am not able	<p>I have been sick, and that full many a day I may not go so far (quod she) nor ride, But I be dead, so prick’th it in my side May I not ask a libel, Sn Som’nou, And answer there by my procúatour To such thing as men would apposen⁴ me?’</p>	
4 Lay to my charge	<p>‘Yes,’ quod this Som’nou, ‘pay anon, let see, Twelve pence to me, and I will thee acquit</p>	7180
5 Little	<p>I shall no profit have thereby but lit⁵ My master hath the profit and not I Come off, and let me ride hastily, Give me twelve pence, I may no longer tarry’</p>	
	<p>‘Twelve pence!’ quod she, ‘now lady Saint Mary So wisly help me out of care and sin, This wide world though that I should it win, Ne have I not twelve pence within my hold Ye knowen well that I am poor and old,</p>	7190
6 Shew your charity	<p>Kithe your almess⁶ upon me poore wretch’</p>	
7 Rumed	<p>‘Nay then,’ quod he, ‘the foule fiend me fetch, If I thee’ excuse, though thou shouldést be spilt’ ‘Alas!’ quod she, ‘God wot, I have no guilt’ ‘Pay me,’ quod he, ‘or by the sweet Saint Anne As I will bear away thy newe pan For debte, which thou owest me of old, When that thou madest thine husband cuckóld, I paid at home for thy correction.’</p>	

<p> 'Thou hest,' quod she, 'by my salvation Ne was I ne'er ere now, widow nor wife, Summon'd unto your court in all my life, Ne never I n'as but of my body true Unto the devil ough and black of hue Give I thy body and my pan also' And when the devil heard her cursen so Upon hei knees, he said in this mannere, 'Now, Mably, mine owen mother dear, Is this your will in earnest that ye say?' 'The devil,' quod she, 'so fetch him ere he dey,¹ And pan and all, but he will him repent' </p>	<p>7200</p> <p>7211</p>	
<p> 'Nay, olde stoat,² that is not mine intent,' Quod this Som'nour, 'for to repenten me For any thing that I have had of thee, I would I had thy smock and every cloth' 'Now, brother,' quod the devil, 'be not wroth Thy body and this pan be mine by right Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night, Where thou shalt knowen of our privacy More than a master of divinity' </p>	<p>7220</p>	<p>² Polecat</p>
<p> And with that word the foule fiend him hent³ Body and soul, he with the devil went, Where as these Som'nours have their heritage, And God that maketh after his image Mankind, save and guide us all and some, And lene⁴ this Som'nour good man to become. </p>		<p>³ Seized</p> <p>⁴ Grant</p>
<p> Lordings, I could have told you, (quod this Fiene,) Had I had leysure for this Som'nour here, After the text of Christ, and Paul, and John, And of our other doctors many one, Such paines, that your heartes might agrise,⁵ All be it so, that no tongue may devise, Though that I might a thousand winter tell, </p>	<p>7230</p>	<p>⁵ Shudder</p>

¹ That
same

² For
'pray'

³ Seize

The pains of thilke¹ cursed house of hell 7234
 But for to keep us from that cursed place,
 Waketh, and prayeth² Jesu of his grace,
 So keep us from the tempter, Sathanas
 Heak'neth this word, bewaie as in this case
 The lion sits in his await alway
 To slay the innocent, if that he may. 7240
 Disposeth aye your heartes to withstond
 The fiend, that you would maken thiall and bond,
 He may not tempten you over your might,
 For Christ will be your champion and your knight,
 And prayeth, that this Som'nour him repent
 Of his misdeeds, ere that the fiend him hent.'³

THE SOMPNOUR'S PROLOGUE.

THIS Som'nour in his stirrups high he stood, 7247

Upon this Friar his hearte was so wood,¹

That like an aspen leaf he quoke for ire

Lordings, quod he, but one thing I desire,

I you beseech, that of your courtesy,

Since ye have heard this false Friar lie,

As suffereth me I may my tale tell

This Friar boasteth that he knoweth hell,

And, God it wot, that is but little wonder,

Friars and fiends be but little asunder

For paidie, ye have often time heard tell,

How that a friar ravish'd was to hell

In spint ones by a visióun,

And as an angel led him up and down, 7260

To shewen him the paines that there were,

In all the place saw he not a freie,

Of other folk he saw enough in woe

Unto this angel spake the friar tho,²

'Now, Sir,' quod he, 'have friars such a grace,

That none of them shall comen in this place?'

'Yes,' quod this angel, 'many a milloun.'

And unto Sathanas he led him down

(And now hath Sathanas, saith he, a tail

¹ Furious.

² Then.

Broader than of a carrack is the sail)
 'Hold up thy tail, thou Sathanas,' quod he,
 'Shew foith thine ers, and let the friar see
 Where is the nest of fairs in this place'
 And ere than half a furlong way of space,
 Right so as bees out swaimen of a hive,
 Out of the devil's ers there 'gannen drive
 A twenty thousand friars on a rout
 And throughout hell they swaimed all about,
 And come again, as fast as they may gon,
 And in his ers they creepen evereach one
 He clapt his tail again, and lay full still
 This friar, when he looked had his fill
 Upon the torments of this soiry place,
 His spunt God restoréd of his grace
 Into his body again, and he awoke,
 But natheless for feare yet he quoke,
 So was the devil's ers aye in his mind,
 That is his heritage of very kind ¹

7270

7280

God save you alle, save this cursod Frere,
 My prologue will I end in this mannere

7290

¹ By nature

THE SOMPNOUR'S TALE.

LORDINGS, there is in Yorkshure, as I guess,
 A marsh countrey ycalled Holderness,
 In which there went a limiter² about
 To preach, and eke to beg, it is no doubt.
 And so befell that on a day this frere
 Had preached at a church in his mannere,
 And specially aboven every thing
 Excited he the people in his preaching

² Begging friar

To tientals, and to give for Godde's sake, 7299
 Wherewith men mighten holy houses make,
 There as divine service is honour'd,
 Not there as it is wasted and devou'd,
 Ne there it needeth not for to be given,
 As to possessioneis,~ that mayen liven
 (Thanked be God) in wealth and abundance
 'Tientals,' said he, 'deliveren from penance
 Their friendes' soules, as well old as young,
 Yea, when that they be hastily y-sung,
 Not for to hold a priest, jolif¹ and gay,
 He singeth not but one mass on a day 7310
 Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the souls
 Full hard it is, with flesh-hook or with owls
 To be yclawed, or to burn or bake
 Now speed you hastily for Christe's sake'

¹ Jolly

And when this friar had said all his intent,

With *qui cum patre* forth his way he went
 When folk in church had giv'n him what them lest,²
 He went his way, no longer would he rest,
 With scip and tipped staff, ytucked high
 In every house he 'gan to pore and pry, 7320
 And begged meal and cheese, or elles corn
 His fellow had a staff tipped with horn,

² Pleased

A pan of tables all of ivory,
 And a pointel³ ypolish'd fetisly,⁴
 And wrote alway the names, as he stood,
 Of alle folk that gave them any good,
 Askaunce that he woulde for them pray
 'Give us a bushel wheat, or malt, or ley,⁵
 A Godde's kichel,⁶ or a trippe⁷ of cheese,
 Or elles what you list, we may not chese,⁸ 7330

³ A style,
 or pencil
⁴ Neatly
⁵ Rye⁶ Little
cake⁷ Small
piece⁸ Choose

* 'Possessioneis' A name given to such religious communities as were endowed with lands, &c

	A Godde's halfpenny, or a mass penny,	7331
¹ Ship	Or give us of your biawn, if ye have any, A dagon ¹ of your blanket, leve dame, Our sister deai, (lo, here I write your name,) Bacon or beef, or such thing as ye find'	
² Servant	A study harlot ² went them aye behind, That was their hostes man, and bare a sack, And what men gave them, laid it on his back And when that he was out at door, anon He planed away the names evereach one,	7340
³ Trifles	That he befor had written in his tables He served them with nifles ³ and with fables 'Nay, there thou liest, thou Som'nou,' quod the Fiene 'Peace,' quod our Host, 'for Churste's mother deai, Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all' 'So thrive I, (quod this Som'nou,) so I shall' So long he went from house to house, till he ¹ Where Came to an house, therio ⁴ he was wont to be Refreshed more than in a hundred places Sick lay the husband man, whose that the place is, Bedrid upon a couche now he lay	7351
	' <i>Deus hic</i> ,' quod he, 'O Thomas friend, good day,' Saude this friar all courteously and soft 'Thomas,' quod he, 'God yield it you,' full oft ⁵ Well Have I upon this bench faren full wele, ⁵ Here have I eaten many a merry meal' And from the bench he drowe away the cat, ⁶ Walking And laid adown his potent ⁶ and his hat, stick And eke his scip, and set himself adown. His fellow was ywalked into town	7360
⁷ Servant	Forth with his knave, ⁷ into that hostelry,	
⁸ Purposed	Where as he shope ⁸ him thilke night to lie'	
	* 'God yield it you' God reward you for it	

<p>'O deare master,' quod this sicke man,</p>	7363	
<p>'How have ye faien since that March began?</p>		
<p>I saw you not this fouteen night and moire'</p>		
<p>'God wot,' quod he, 'labou'd have I full soire,</p>		
<p>And specially for thy salvatioun</p>		
<p>Have I said many a precious onison,</p>		
<p>And for our othei friendes, God them bless</p>		
<p>I have this day been at your church at mess,¹</p>	7370	¹ Mass
<p>And said a sermon to my simple wit,</p>		
<p>Not all after the text of holy writ,</p>		
<p>For it is hard to you, as I suppose,</p>		
<p>And therefore will I teach you aye the glose²</p>		² Com- ment
<p>Glosing is a full glorious thing certain,</p>		
<p>For letter slay'th, so as we clerkes sayn</p>		
<p>There have I taught them to be charitable,</p>		
<p>And spend then good there³ it is reasonable</p>		³ Where
<p>And there I saw our dame, ah, where is she?'</p>		
<p>'Yonder I trow that in the yaid she be,'</p>	7380	
<p>Saide this man, 'and she will come anon'</p>		
<p>'Hey master, welcome be ye by Saint John,'</p>		
<p>Saide this wife, 'how fare ye heartily?'</p>		
<p>This finar ariſeth up full courteously,</p>		
<p>And hei embriaceth in his aimes narrow,</p>		
<p>And kisseth her sweet, and chirkeith as a sparow</p>		
<p>With his lippes 'Dame,' quod he, 'night well,</p>		
<p>As he that is your servant every del⁴</p>		⁴ Every whit
<p>Thanked be God, that you gave soul and life,</p>		
<p>Yet saw I not this day so fan a wife</p>	7390	
<p>In all the churche, God so save me'</p>		
<p>'Yea, God amend defaultes, Sn,' quod she,</p>		
<p>'Algates⁵ welcome be ye, by my fay'</p>		⁵ However
<p>'Grand mercy, Dame, that have I found alway</p>		
<p>But of your greate goodness, by your leave,</p>		
<p>I woulde pray you that ye not you grieve,</p>		

	I will with Thomas speak a little thow: These curates be so negligent and slow To giopen tenderly a consciéce In shrift, ¹ in preaching is my diligence And study, in Peter's wordes and in Paul's, I walk and fishe Christian menne's souls, To yield our Lord Jesu his proper rent, To spread his word is set all mine intent' 'Now by your faith, O deare Su,' quod she, 'Chideth him well for Sante Chanty He is aye angry as is a pismire, Though that he have all that he can desue, Though I him wue ² a-night, and make him waim, And over him lay my leg and eke mine arm, 7397 He groaneth as our boai, h'th in our sty Othei dispoit of him right none have I, I may not please him in no mannei case' 'O Thomas, <i>je vous dis</i> , Thomas, Thomas, This makoth the fiend, this muste be amended Lie is a thing that high God hath defended, ³ And thereof will I speak a word or two' 'Now, master,' quod the wife, 'ere that I go, What will ye dine? I will go thereabout' 'Now, Dame,' quod he, ' <i>je vous dis sans doute</i> , 7420 Have I not of a capon but the liver, And of your white bread not but a shiver, ⁴ And after that a roasted pigge's head, (But I ne would for me no beast were dead,) Then had I with you homely suffisance I am a man of little sustenance My spirit hath his fost'ring in the Bible My body is aye so ready and so penible ⁵ To waken, that my stomach is destroy'd I pray you, Dame, that ye be nought annoy'd, 7430
¹ Confession	
² Cover	
³ Forbidden	
⁴ Thin slice	
⁵ Pains-taking	

Though I so friendly you my counsel shew ;	7431	
By God, I n'old ¹ have told it but a few'		¹ Would not
'Now, Sir,' quod she, 'but one word ere I go ,		
My child is dead within these weekes two,		
Soon after that ye went out of this town'		
'His death saw I by revelatioun,'		
Saide this friar, 'at home in our dortour ²		² Dormitory
I dare well say, that ere than half an hour		
After his death, I saw him boine to bliss		
In mine avision, so God me wiss ³	7440	³ Direct
So did our sexton, and our fermerere,*		
That have been true friars fifty year ,		
They may now, God be thanked of his loan,		
Maken then jubilee, and walk alone		
And up I rose, and all our convent eke,		
With many a teare tulling on our cheek,		
Withouten noise or clatteing of bells,		
<i>Te Deum</i> was our song, and nothing else,		
Save that to Christ I bade an orison,		
Thanking him of my revelatioun	7450	
For, Sir and Dame, trusteth me ight well,		
Our orisons be more effectuel,		
And more we see of Christe's secret things,		
Than boiel folk, ⁴ although that they be kings		⁴ Laymen.
We live in povert', and in abstinence,		
And boiel folk in riches and dispense		
Of meat and drink, and in their foul delight		
We have this worlde's lust ⁵ all in despight ⁶		⁵ Pleasure ⁶ Contempt
Jazar and Dives liveden diversely,		
And diverse gueidon hadden they thereby.	7460	
Whoso will pray, he must fast and be clean,		
And fat his soul, and keep his body lean		

* 'Fermerere' The officer in a monastery who had charge of the infirmary

¹ Clothing	<p>We faie, as saith the Apostle, cloth¹ and food 7463</p> <p>Sufficeth us, though they be not full good</p> <p>The cleanness and the fasting of us fiores,</p> <p>Maketh that Christ acceptoth our praycies.</p> <p>‘Lo, Moses forty days and forty night</p> <p>Fasted, ere that the high God full of might</p> <p>Spake with him in the mountan of Sinay</p> <p>With empty womb of fasting many a day, 7470</p> <p>Received he the lawe, that was witten</p>
² Know	<p>With Godde’s finger, and Eh, well ye witten,²</p> <p>In mount Oreb, ere he had any speech</p> <p>With highe God, that is ouir livers’ leech,</p> <p>He fasted long, and was in contemplanche</p> <p>‘Aaion, that had the temple in governance,</p> <p>And eke the other priestes every one,</p> <p>Into the temple when they shoulde gon</p> <p>To prayen for the people, and do sovrise,</p>
³ Would not	<p>They n’olden³ drunken in no maner wise 7480</p> <p>No drinke, which that might them drunken make,</p>
⁴ Watch	<p>But there in abstinence pray and wake,⁴</p> <p>Lest that they dieden· take heed what I say—</p> <p>But they be sober that for the people pray—</p> <p>Ware that I say—no more for it sufficeth</p> <p>Our Lord Jesu, as holy writ deviseth,</p> <p>Gave us example of fasting and prayeres:</p>
⁵ Simple	<p>Therefore we mendicants, we sely⁵ fiores,</p> <p>Be wedded to povert’ and continence,</p> <p>To charity, humbless, and abstinence, 7490</p> <p>To persecucion for righteousness,</p>
⁶ Compassion	<p>To weeping, misericorde,⁶ and to cleanness.</p> <p>And therefore may ye see that our prayeres</p> <p>(I speak of us, we mendicants, we freies,)</p> <p>Be to the highe God more acceptable</p> <p>Than yowes, with your feastes at your table.</p>

<p> 'From Paradise first, if I shall not lie, Was man out chased for his gluttony, And chaste was man in Paradise certáin But hearken now, Thomas, what I shall sayn, I have no text of it, as I suppose, But I shall find it in a mannei glose,¹ That specially our sweete Lord Jesus Spake this by finis, when he saide thus, "Blessed be they that poor in spirit be" And so forth all the gospel may ye see, Whether it be liker our professiún, Or thenis that swinmen in possessiún, Fie on then pomp, and on then gluttony, And on their lewedness I them defy </p>	7497	
<p> Me thinketh they be like Jovian, Fat as a whale, and walken as a swan, All vinolent as bottle in the spence,² Their prayer is of full great reverence; When they for soules say the Psalm of Davit, Lo, "Buf" they say, <i>Cor meum eructavit</i>, </p>	7510	<p>¹ Comment</p>
<p> 'Who followeth Christe's gospel and his loie³ But we, that humble be, and chaste, and poie,⁴ Workers of Godde's word, not auditoús? Therefore right as an hawk upon a sours⁵ Up spring'th into the air, right so prayéies Of charitable and chaste busy fieries, Maken their souis to Godde's eares two Thomas, Thomas, so may I ride or go, And by that lord that cleped is Saint Ive, N'ere thou our brother, shouldest thou not thrive In our chapíter pray we day and night To Christ, that he thee sende health and might Thy body for to wielden hastily' </p>	7520	<p>² Store-room</p> <p>³ Doctrine</p> <p>⁴ Poor</p> <p>⁵ A rise</p>
<p>'God wot,' quod he, 'nothing thereof feel I,</p>	7530	

	As help me Christ, as I in fewe years	7531
¹ Divers sorts	Have spended upon divers mannei ¹ fieres	
² Better	Full many a pound, yet fare I never the bot, ²	
³ Laid out	Certain my good have I almost beset ³	
⁴ Gone	Farewell my good, for it is all ago. ⁴	
	The friar answer'd, 'O Thomas, dost thou so?	
	What needeth you diverse friars to seech?	
	What needeth him that hath a perfect leech,	
	To seeken other leeches in the town?	
	Your inconstance is your confusioun	7540
	Hold ye then me, or elles our convent,	
	To pray for you be insufficiunt?	
⁵ Trick	Thomas, that jape ⁵ n'is not worth a mite,	
⁶ Little	Your malady is for we have too lite ⁶	
	Ah, give that convent half a quarter oats,	
	And give that convent four and twenty groats,	
	And give that friar a penny, and let him go	
	Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be so	
	What is a farthing worth parted on twelve?	
⁷ Made one, united	Lo, eache thing that is oned ⁷ in himselve	7550
	Is more strong than when it is yscatter'd	
	Thomas, of me thou shalt not be yflater'd,	
	Thou wouldest have our labour all for nought	
	The highe God, that all this world hath wrought,	
	Saith, that the workman worthy is his hire	
	Thomas, nought of your treasure I desire	
	As for myself, but that all our convent	
	To pray for you is aye so diligent	
	And for to bulden Christe's owen church	
⁸ Work.	Thomas, if ye will learnen for to wurch, ⁸	7560
	Of building up of churches may ye find	
	If it be good, in Thomas' life of Inde	
⁹ Lay	'Ye liggen ⁹ here full of anger and of ire,	
	With which the devil set your heart on fire,	

And chiden here this holy innocent	7565	
You wife, that is so good and patient		
And therefore trow ¹ me, Thomas, if thee lest, ²		¹ Believe
Ne strive not with thy wife, as for the best.		² Please
And bear this word away now by thy faith,		
Touching such thing, lo, what the wise saith		
'Within thy house ne be thou no lion,		
To thy subyéctys do none oppressiún,		
Ne make thou not thine acquaintánce to flee		
'And yet, Thomas, eftsoones chaige I thee,		
Beware from me that in thy bosom sleepeth,		
Ware from the serpent, that so shily creepeth		
Under the grass, and stingeth subtilly		
Beware, my son, and hearken patiently,		
That twenty thousand men have lost their lives		
For striving with their lemans and their wives.	7580	
Now since ye have so holy' and meek a wife,		
What needeth you, Thomas, to maken strife?		
There n'is ywis ³ no serpént so cruél,		³ Certain-ly
When man tread'th on his tail, nor half so fell,		
As woman is, when she hath caught an ire,		
Very vengeance is then all her desre		
'He is a sin, one of the greate seven,		
Abominable unto the God of heaven,		
And to himself it is destruction		
This every lewed ⁴ vicar and parson	7590	⁴ Ignorant
Can say, how ire engend'reth homicide;		
Ire is in sooth executor of pride		
'I could of ire say so muchel sorrow,		
My tale shoulde lasten till to-morrow		
And therefore pray I God both day and night,		
An irous ⁵ man God send him little might		⁵ Passion-ate
It is great harm, and certes great pity		
To set an irous man in high degree.		

¹ Chief magistrate	‘Whilom there was an iious potestat, ¹	7599
² Term of office	As saith Senec, that during his estate ²	
	Upon a day out iiden knightes two,	
	And, as fortune would that it were so,	
	That one of them came home, that othor nought	
	Anon the knight before the judge is brought,	
	That saide thus, “Thou hast thy fellow slain,	
	For which I deem thee to the death certáin”	
	And to another knight commanded he,	
	“Go, lead him to the death, I charge thee”	
	And happen’d, as they wenten by the way	
³ Die	Toward the place there as he shoulde dey, ³	7610
⁴ Thought	The knight came, which men wenden ⁴ had been dead	
⁵ Counsel	Then thoughten they it was the beste rede ⁵	
	To lead them bothe to the judge again	
	They saiden, “Lord, the knight ne hath not slain	
	His fellow, here he standeth whole alive”	
	“Ye shall be dead,” quod he, “so may I thrive,	
	That is to say, both one, and two, and thice”	
	And to the fiste knight ight thus spake he	
⁶ At all events	“I damned thee, thou must algate ⁶ be dead	
	And thou also must needes lose thine head,	7620
	For thou art cause why thy fellow deyth.”	
	And to the thude knight ight thus he sayeth,	
	“Thou hast not done that I commanded thee.”	
⁷ Cause	And thus he did do ⁷ slay them alle three	
⁸ Given to drink	‘Irous Cambyses was eke dronkelew, ⁸	
⁹ Ill tempered	And aye delighted him to be a shiew ⁹	
¹⁰ Attendants	And so befell, a lord of his meime, ¹⁰	
	That loved vntuous morality,	
	Said on a day betwixt them two ight thus	
	“A lord is lost, if he be vicious,	7630
	And drunkenness is eke a foul record	
	Of any man, and namely of a lord	

There is full many an eye and many an ear 7633
 Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot¹ wher²
 For Godde's love, drink more attemprely³
 Wine maketh man to losen wretchedly
 His mind, and eke his limbes every one
 "The reverse shalt thou see," quod he, "anon,
 And prove it by thine own experience,
 That wine ne doth to folk no such offence 7640
 There is no wine bereaveth me my might
 Of hand, nor foot, nor of mine eyen sight"
 And for despite he drank muchel more
 An hundred part than he had done before,
 And right anon, this cursed nous wretch
 This knyght's sone let before him fetch,
 Commanding him he should before him stand
 And suddenly he took his bow in hand,
 And up the sting he pulled to his ear,
 And with an arrow he slew the child right there 7650
 "Now whether have I a siker⁴ hand or non?"⁵
 Quod he, "Is all my might and mind agone?
 Hath wine bereaved me mine eyen sight?"
 "What should I tell the answer of the knyght?
 His son was slain, there is no more to say
 Beware therefore with lordes for to play,
 Singeth *Placebo*, and I shall if I can,
 But⁶ if it be unto a poore man 7660
 To a poor man men should his vices tell,
 But not to a lord, though he should go to hell
 "Lo, nous Cyrus, thilke⁷ Persian,
 How he destroyed the river of Gisen,
 For that an hoise of his was drent⁸ therein,
 When that he wente Babylon to win.
 He made that the river was so small,
 That women might it waden over all

¹ Knows
 not
² Whether
³ Moder-
 ately

⁴ Sure
⁵ For 'not'

⁶ Unless

⁷ That

⁸ Drowned

	Lo what said he, that so well teachen can? ²	7667
	Ne be no fellow to none uous man,	
¹ Furious	Ne with no wood ¹ man walke by the way,	
	Lest thee repent, I will no further say	
	‘Now, Thomas, leve brothei, leave thine ne,	
	Thou shalt me find as just as is a squire,	
	Hold not the devil’s knife aye to thine heaht,	
	Thine anger doth thee all too soie smart,	
	But shew to me all thy confessioun ²	
	‘Nay,’ quod the sicke man, ‘by Saint Simon	
² Confessed	I have been shuiven ² this day of my curate,	
	I have him told all wholly mine estate	
	Needeth no more to speak of it, saith he,	
	But if me list of mine humilty ³	7680
	‘Give me then of thy gold to make our cloister,’	
	Quod he, ‘for many a mussel and many an	
	oyster,	
	When othei men have been full well at case,	
³ Raise	Hath been our food, our cloister for to rese ³	
⁴ Scarcely	And yet, God wot, uneth ⁴ the fundament ⁵	
⁵ Foundation	Performed is, nor of our pavement	
⁶ Habitation	N’is not a tile yet within our wones ⁶	
	By God, we owen forty pound for stones.	
	Now help, Thomas, for him that hallow’d hell,	
	For elles must we oure bookes sell,	7690
	And if ye lack our predication,	
	Then go’th this world all to destruction	
	For whoso from this world would us bereave,	
	So God me save, Thomas, by your leave,	
	He would bereave out of this world the sun	
⁷ Are able	For who can teach and worken as we conne? ⁷	
	And that is not of litle time, (quod he,)	
⁸ Since	But sithen ⁸ Elie was, and Elisce,	
	Have finis been, that find I of record,	

In chaunty, ythanked be our Lord
Now, Thomas, help for Sainte Chaunty.' 7700

And down anon he set him on his knee

This sicke man wox well nigh wood for ire,
He woulde that the friar had been a-fire
With his false dissimulation,

'Such thing as is in my possession,'
Quod he, 'that may I give you and none other
Ye say me thus, how that I am your brother'
'Yea certes,' quod this friar, 'yea, trusteth well,
I took our dame the letter of our seal' 7710

'Now well,' quod he, 'and somewhat shall I give
Unto your holy convent while I live,
And in thine hand thou shalt it have anon,
On this condition, and other none,
That thou depart¹ it so, my deare brother,
That every friar have as much as other.
This shalt thou swear on thy profession
Withouten fraud or cavillation'

'I sweai it,' quod the friar, 'upon my faith'
And therewithal his hand in his he lay'th, 7720
'Lo here my faith, in me shall be no lack'

'Then put thine hand adown right by my back,'
Saide this man, 'and grope well behind,
Beneath my buttock, there thou shalte find
A thing, that I have hid in privy'
'Ah,' thought this friar, 'that shall go with me.'
And down his hand he launcheth to the clift,
In hope for to finden there a gift

And when this sicke man felte this frere
About his towel gopen there and here, 7730
Amid his hand he let the friar a fart,
There n'is no capel² drawing in a cart,
That might have let a fart of such a soun.

¹ Divide

² Draught-horse.

^a Thence	The final up start, as doth a wood ¹ houn	7734
^b Purpose	'Ah, false churl,' quod he, 'for Godde's bones, This hast thou in despite done for the nones ² Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may'	
^c Servant	His memie, ³ which that hearden this affiay, Came leaping in, and chased out the fiore, And forth he go'th with a full angry chere, ⁴	7740
^d Countenance ^e Fetched	And fet ⁵ his fellow, there as lay his stoic He looked as it were a wilde boai,	
^f Ground	And gunte ⁶ with his teeth, so was he wioth A stundy pace down to the court he go'th, Where as there wonn'd a man of great honouir, To whom that he was alway confessour This worthy man was lord of that villāge. This final came, as he were in a rage, Where as this lord sat eating at his board Unnethe ⁷ might the final speak onc word,	7750
^g With difficulty	Till atte last he saide, 'God you see' This lord 'gan look, and said, ' <i>Benedicite</i> ' What? Final John, what manner world is this? I see well that something there is amiss, Ye looken as the wood were full of thieves Sit down anon, and tell me what your grievance is, And it shall be amended, if I may'	
^h Reward you	'I have,' quod he, 'had a despite to-day, God yelde you, ⁸ adown in your villāge, That in this world there n'is so poor a page,	7760
ⁱ Would not	That he n'old ⁹ have abominatioun Of that I have received in your town And yet ne grieveth me nothing so sore, As that the olde churl, with lockes hoar, Blasphemed hath our holy convent oke' 'Now, master,' quod this lord, 'I you boseek.' 'No master, Sir,' quod he, 'but servitour,	

Though I have had in schoole that honour
 God liketh not, that men us Rabbi call,
 Neiher in market, nor in your laige hall'

7768

'No force,'¹ quod he, 'but tell me all your grief'

¹ No mat-
ter

'Sir,' quod this friar, 'an odious mischief

This day betid is to mine order, and me,

And so *per consequens* to each degree

Of holy church, God amend it soon'

'Sir,' quod the lord, 'ye wot what is to don

Distemper you not, ye be my confessour

Ye be the salt of the earth, and the savour,

For Godde's love your patience now hold,

Tell me your grief' And he anon him told

7780

As ye have heard before, ye wot well what

The lady of the house aye stille sat,

Till she had hearde what the friar said

'Hey, Godde's mother,' quod she, 'blissful maid,

Is there ought elles? tell me faithfully'

'Madame,' quod he, 'how thinketh you thereby?'

'How that me thinketh?' quod she, 'so God me
 speed,

I say, a churl hath done a churle's deed

What should I say? God let him never the,²

² Thrive

His sické head is full of vanity,

7790

I hold him in a manner³ phrenesy.'

³ Sort of

'Madame,' quod he, 'by God, I shall not lie,

But I in other wise may be awreke,⁴

⁴ Reveng-
ed.

I shall diffame him over all, there I speak;

This false blasphemour, that charged me

To parten that will not departed be,

To every man alike, with mischance'

The lord sat still, as he were in a trance,

And in his heart he rolled up and down,

How had this churl imaginatioun

7800

	To shewen such a problem to the fiere	7801
¹ Before	‘Never eist ¹ ere now ne heard I such mattere;	
² Believe	I tiow ² the Devil put it in his mind.	
³ Arithme tic	In all arismetrike ³ shall there no man find Before this day of such a questión Who shoulde make a demonstratioun, That every man should have alike his part As of a sound or savour of a fart?	
⁴ Curse	O nice proude churl, I shiew ⁴ his face ‘Lo, Sires,’ quod the lord, ‘with harde grace,* 7810 Who ever heard of such a thing ere now? To every man alike? tell me how It is an impossible, it may not be	
⁵ Foolish ⁶ Thrive	Hey, nice ⁵ churl, God let him never the ⁶ The rumbling of a fart, and every soun, N’is but of ane reverberatioun, And ever it wasteth lite and lite ⁷ away, There n’is no man can decemen, by my fay, If that it were departed ⁸ equally	
⁸ Divided	What? lo, my churl, lo yet how shiewedly ⁹	7820
⁹ Ill tem peredly	Unto my confessoür to-day he spake, I hold him certain a demoniac Now eat your meat, and let the churl go play, Let him go hang himself a devil way’ Now stood the lorde’s squer atte board, That carved his meat, and hearde word by word Of all this thung, of which I have you said. ‘My lord,’ quod he, ‘be ye not evil apaid, ¹⁰ I coude telle for a gowne-cloth ¹¹ To you, Sir Friar, so that ye be not wioth, How that this fart should even ydealed be Among your convent, if it liked thee.’	7830

* ‘With harde grace’ May misfortune attend him (the churl)

'Tell,' quod the lord, 'and thou shalt have anon
A gowne-cloth, by God and by Saint John' 7834

'My lord,' quod he, 'when that the weather is fan,

Withouten wind, or perturbíng of au,

Let¹ bring a cart-wheel here into this hall,

¹ Cause

But looke that it have his spokes all,

Twelve spokes hath a cart-wheel commonly;

And bring me then twelve fairs, weet² ye why?

² Know

For thutteen is a convent as I guess

7841

Your confessóir here for his worthiness

Shall perfóim up the number of his convent

Then shall they kneel adown by one assent,

And to every spoke's end in this mannére

Full sadly³ lay his nose shall a fiere,

³ Carefully

Your noble cónfessor, there God him save,

Shall hold his nose upright under the nave.

Then shall this churl, with belly stiff and tought⁴

⁴ Tight

As any tabour, hither be ybrought,

7850

And set him on the wheel right of this cart

Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,

And ye shall see, up peril of my life,

By very proof that is demonstrative,

That equally the sound of it will wend,⁵

⁵ Go

And eke the stunk, unto the spokes' end,

Save that this worthy man, your confessoúr,

(Because he is a man of great honóur,)

Shall have the firste fruit, as reason is.

The noble usage of fairs yet it is,

7860

The worthy men of them shall first be served.

And certainly he hath it well deserved;

He hath to-day taught us so muchel good,

With preaching in the pulpit there he stood,

That I may vouchesafe, I say for me,

He had the firste smell of fartes three,

And so would all his biethren hardily, 7867
He beareth him so fan and holy'

The lord, the lady, and each man, save the fiere,
Saiden, that Jankin spake in this matter
As well as Euclid, or else Ptolomy
Touching the chul, they saiden, subtilty
And high wit made him speaken as he spake,
He n'is no fool, ne no demoniac
And Jankin hath ywon a newe gown;
My tale is done, we be almost at town.

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

'SIR Clerk of Oxenford,' our Hoste said, 7877

'Ye ride as still and coy, as doth a maid,

Weie newe spoused, sitting at the board

This day ne heard I of your tongue a word

I trow ye study abouten some sophime ¹

¹ Sophism

But Solomon saith, that every thing hath time

For Godde's sake as be of better cheer,

It is no time for to studiën here

Tell us some meny tale by your fay, ²

² Faith.

For what man that is enter'd in a play,

He needes must unto the play assent

But preacheth not, as friars do in Lent,

To make us for our olde synnes weep,

Ne that thy tale make us not to sleep 7890

'Tell us some meny thing of áventures,

Your terms, your coloures, and your figúres,

Keep them in stoie, till so be ye indite

High style, as when that men to kinges write.

Speaketh so plain at this time, I you pray,

That we may understanden what ye say'

This worthy Clerk benignely answer'd,

'Hoste,' quod he, 'I am under your yerd, ³

³ Yerd,
wand of
direction

Ye have of us as now the governance,

And therefore would I do you obéisance, 7900

¹ Boldly	As far as reason asketh hardily ¹	7901
² Padua	I will you tell a tale, which that I Leained at Padow ⁴ of a worthy cleik, As proved by his wordes and his werk. He is now dead, and nailed in his chest, I pray to God so give his soule rest Francis Petrarke, the laureat poët, Highte ² this cleik, whose rectorike sweet Illumin'd all Itaille of poetry, As Linian did of philosophy,	7910
³ Was called	Or law, or other art particulere. But death, that will not suffer us dwellen here, But as it were a twinkling of an eye, Them both hath slam, and alle we shall die 'But forth to tellen of this worthy man, That taughte me this tale, as I began, I say that fust he with high style inditeth (Ere he the body of his tale writeth) A proem, in the which describeth he Piedmont, and of Saluces ⁴ the country,	7920
⁴ Saluzzo	And speak'th of Apennine the hilles high, That be the boundes of west Lombardy. And of Mount Vesulus in special, Where as the Po out of a welles small Taketh his firste springing and his source, That eastward aye increaseth in his course To Emilie ⁵ ward, to Ferare, and Veníce, The which a longe thing were to devise And truly, as to my judgement, Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,	7930
	Save that he will conveyen his matiere: But this is the tale which that ye may hear.'	

* 'To Emilie' A district of Italy, so called from the Via Emilia, by which it is traversed

THE CLERK'S TALE.

THERE is ight at the West side of Itaille, 7933
 Down at the root of Vesulus the cold,
 A lusty¹ plain, abundant of vitaille,
 There many a town and tower thou may'st behold,
 That founded were in time of fathers old,
 And many another delectable sight,
 And Saluces this noble country ight²

¹ Pleasant² Is called.

A marquis whilom lord was of that land, 7940
 As were his worthy elders³ him before,
 And obeisant, aye ready to his hand,
 Were all his lieges, bothe less and more :
 Thus in delight he liveth, and hath done yore,⁴
 Belov'd and drad,⁵ through favour of fortune,
 Both of his lordes, and of his commune⁶

³ Ancestors⁴ Long⁵ Dreaded⁶ Commonalty

Therewith he was, to speaken of lin'age,
 The gentlest yborn of Lombardy,
 A fair person, and strong, and young of age,
 And full of honour and of courtesy 7950
 Discreet enough, his country for to gie,⁷
 Save in some thinges that he was to blame,
 And Walter was this younge lorde's name

⁷ Guide

I blame him thus, that he consider'd nought
 In time coming what might him betide,
 But on his lust⁸ present was all his thought,
 And for to hawk and hunt on every side
 Well nigh all other cares let he slide,
 And eke he n'old⁹ (and that was woist of all)
 Wedden no wife for ought that might befall 7960

⁸ Pleasure⁹ Would not

¹ Together in a flock	<p>Only that point his people bare so sore, That flockmel¹ on a day to him they went, And one of them, that wisest was of lore, (O! elles that² the lord would best assent That he should tell him what the people meant, O! elles could he well shew such matt��re,) He to the marquis said as ye shall hear</p>	7961
² Either that	<p>‘O noble Marquis! your humanity Assueth us and giveth us hardiness, As oft as time is of necessity, That we to you may tell our heaviness Accepteth, Lord, then of your gentleness, That we with piteous heart unto you plain,³ And let your eares not my voice disdain</p>	7970
³ Com plain	<p>‘All⁴ have I not to do in this matt��re More than another man hath in this place, Yet for as much as ye, my Lord so dear, Have alway shewed me favour and grace, I dare the better ask of you a space Of audience, to shewen our request, And ye, my Lord, to do right as you lest⁵</p>	7980
⁴ Al though	<p>‘For certes, Lord, so well us liketh you And all your work, and ever have done, that we Ne coulden not ouself devisen how We mighten live in more felicity Save one thing, Lord, if it your wille be, That for to be a wedded man you lest, Then were your people in sovereign heartes rest</p>	
⁵ Please	<p>‘Boweth your neck under the blissful yoke Of sovereignty, and not of service,</p>	7990

Which that men clepen¹ spousal oi wedlock 7991 ¹ Call
 And thinketh, Lord, among youi thoughtes wise,
 How that ouī dayes pass in sundiū wise,
 For though we sleep, oi wake, oi ioam, or iide,
 Aye fle th the time, it will no man abide

‘ And though youi greene youthe flower as yet,
 In creepeth age alway as still as stone,
 And death menaceth every age, and smit² ² Smiteth
 In each estate, for there escapeth none
 And all so certain, as we know each one 8000
 That we shall die, as uncertain we all
 Be of that day when death shall on us fall

‘ Accepteth then of us the true intent,
 That never yet refuseden your hest,³ ³ Com-
 And we will, Lord, if that ye will assent, mand
 Choose you a wife in short time at the most,⁴ ⁴ Most
 Born of the gentlest and of the best
 Of all this land, so that it oughte seem
 Honour to God and you, as we can deem.

‘ Deliver us out of all this busy diede,⁵ 8010 ⁵ Doubt
 And take a wife, for highe Godde's sake:
 For if it so befell, as God forbede,
 That through youi death your lineage should slake,
 And that a strange successor should take
 Your heritage, oh! woe were us on live ⁶
 Wherefore we pray you hastily to wive.’ ⁶ Us who
 survive

Their meeke prayér and their piteous cheer,
 Made the marquis for to have pity
 ‘ Ye will,’ quod he, ‘ mine owen people dear,
 To that I ne'er ere thought constrainen me. 8020

<p>¹ Where</p>	<p>I me rejoiced of my liberty, That seldom time is found in marriage, There¹ I was free, I must be in servage. 8021</p>
	<p>‘But natheless I see your true intent, And trust upon your wit, and have done aye Wherefore of my free will I will assent To wedden me, as soon as e’er I may But there as ye have proffer’d me to-day To choosen me a wife, I you release That choice, and pray you of that proffer cease 8030</p>
<p>² Goodness ³ Stock, race</p>	<p>‘For God it wot, that children often been Unlike then worthy elders them before, Bounty² com’th all of God, not of the strenge,³ Of which they be ygender’d and yboie I trust in Godde’s bounty, and therefore My marriage, and mine estate, and rest I him betake,⁴ he may do as him lest⁵</p>
<p>⁴ Com- mend to him ⁵ Please</p>	<p>‘Let me alone in choosing of my wife, That charge upon my back I will endure But I you pray, and charge upon your life, 8040 That what wife that I take, ye me assure To worship her while that her life may dure, In word and work both here and elles where, As she an emperoure’s daughter were.</p>
<p>⁶ Murmur</p>	<p>‘And furthermore this shall ye swear, that ye Against my choice shall never glutch⁶ nor strive. For since I shall forego my liberty At your request, as ever may I thrive, There as mine heart is set, there will I wive.</p>

And, but¹ ye will assent in such mannere,
I pray you speak no more of this matiere'

8050

¹ Unless

With heartly will they sworn and assenten
To all this thing, there said not one wight nay
Beseeching him of grace, ere that they wenten,
That he would granten them a certain day
Of his spousal, as soon as e'er he may,
For yet alway the people somewhat dlead,
Lest that this marquis woulde no wife wed

He granted them a day, such as him lest,²
On which he would be wedded sikerly,³
And said he did all this at their request,
And they with humble heart full buxomly⁴
Kneeling upon their knes full reverently
Him thanken all, and thus they have an end
Of their intent, and home again they wend

8060

² Pleased³ Certain
ly⁴ Obedient-
ly

And hereupon he to his officérs
Commandeth for the feaste to purvey.
And to his privy knightes and squérs
Such charge he gave, as him list on them lay.
And they to his commandement obey,
And each of them doth all his diligence
To do unto the feast all reverence.

8070

PARS SECUNDA.

Nought far from thilke⁵ palace honou'able,
Where as this marquis shope⁶ his mairiáge,
There stood a thorp,⁷ of sighte delectáble,
In which that poore folk of that villáge
Hadden their beastes and then haiboungage,⁸

⁵ That⁶ Prepared⁷ Village⁸ Dwelling

And of thei labour took thei sustenance,
 After that th' earth gave them abundance

8078

Among this poore folk there dwelt a man,
 Which that was holden poorest of them all
 But highe God sometime senden can
 His grace unto a little ox's stall
 Janicola, men of that thoip him call
 A daughter had he, fair enough to sight,
 And Grisildis this younge maiden hight

But for to speak of virtuous beauty,
 Then was she one the fairest under sun
 Full poorely yfoster'd up was she
 No likerous¹ lust was in her heart yun,
 Well offer of the well than of the tun
 She drank, and for² she woulde virtue please,
 She knew well labour, but no idle case

¹ Gluttonous

8090

² Because

But though this maiden tender were of age,
 Yet in the breast of her virginity
 There was inclosed sad³ and ripe courage⁴
 And in great reverence and charity
 Her olde poore father foster'd she
 A few sheep spinning on the field she kept,
 She woulde not be idle till she slept

³ Grave
⁴ Spirit

8100

And when she homeward came, she woulde bring
 Wortes⁵ and other herbes times oft,
 The which she shred and seeth'd for her living,
 And made her bed full hard, and nothing soft
 And aye she kept her father's life on loft⁶
 With every obeisance and diligence,
 That child may do to father's reverence.

⁵ Cabbages

⁶ Up, aloft

Upon Grisild', this poore créature,
 Full often sithe¹ this marquis set his eye,
 As he on hunting rode paráventure :
 And when it fell that he might hei espy,
 He not with wanton looking of folly
 His eyen cast on hei, but in sad² wise
 Upon her chere³ he would him oft avise,⁴

8108

¹ Times² Serious.³ Counte-
nance,
mien⁴ Consi-
der⁵ Fem-
nine qua-
lities

Commending in his heart her womanhede,⁵
 And eke hei vntue, passing any wight
 Of so young age, as well in chere as deed
 For though the people have no great insight
 In vntue, he considered full ight
 Hei bounty,⁶ and disposed that he would
 Wed hei only, if ever he wedden should.

8120

⁶ Goodness.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
 Tellen what woman that it shoulde be,
 For which mervailé wonder'd many a man,
 And saiden, when they were in pivity,
 ' Will not our lord yet leave his vanity ?
 Will he not wed ? Alas, alas the while !
 Why will he thus himself and us beguile ?'

But natheless this marquis hath done⁷ make
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in azúre,
 Brooches and ringes, for Grisilda's sake,
 And of hei clothing took he the measúre
 Of a maiden like unto her stature,
 And eke of othei ornamentes all,
 That unto such a wedding shoulde fall.

8130

⁷ Caused

The time of undern⁸ of the same day
 Approacheth, that this wedding shoulde be,

⁸ Nine
o'clock

And all the palace put was in array,
Both hall and chambers, each in his degree,
Houses of office stuffed with plenty
There may'st thou see of dainteous vitaille,
That may be found, as far as lasteth Itaille

8138

This royal marquis richely array'd,
Lords and ladies in his company,
The which unto the feaste weren pray'd,
And of his retinue the bach'lery,
With many a sound of sundry melody,
Unto the village, of the which I told,
In this array the righte way they hold

Gnaw'd of this (God wot) full innocent,
That for her shapen was all this array,
To fetchen water at a well is went,
And cometh home as soon as e'er she may
For well she had heard say, that thilke¹ day
The marquis shoulde wed, and, if she might,
She woulde fain have seen some of that sight

8150

¹ That
same

She thought, 'I will with other maidens stond,
That be my fellows, in our doo, and see
The marchioness, and thereto will I fond²
To do at home, as soon as it may be,
The labour which that 'longeth unto me,
And then I may at leisure her behold,
If she this way unto the castle hold'

8160

² Strove

And as she would over the threshold gon,
The marquis came and 'gan her for to call,
And she set down her water-pot anon
Beside the threshold in an ox's stall,

And down upon hei knees she 'gan to fall,
And with sad¹ countenance kneeleth still,
Till she had heard what was the lorde's will

8168

¹ Steady

This thoughtful marquis spake unto this
maid

Full soberly, and said in this mannere
'Where is your father, Giusildis?' he said
And she with reuerence in humble cheei
Answered, 'Lord, he is already here'
And in she go'th withouten longer let,²
And to the marquis she her father fet³

² Delay³ Fetched

He by the hand then took this pooie man,
And saide thus, when he him had aside
'Janicola, I neither may nor can
Longer the pleasance of mine hearte hide,
If that thou vouchesafe, whatso betide,
Thy daughter will I take, ere that I wend⁴
As for my wife, unto her life's end

8180

⁴ Go

'Thou lovest me, that wot I well certain,
And art my faithful hegeman ybore,
And all that liketh me, I dare well sayn
It liketh thee, and specially therefore
Tell me that point, that I have said before,
If that thou wilt unto this purpose draw,
To taken me as for thy son-in-law'

8190

This sudden case⁵ this man astonied so,
That red he wax'd, abash'd, and all quaking
He stood, unnethes⁶ said he wordes mo,⁷
But only thus, 'Lord,' quod he, 'my willing
Is as ye will, nor against your liking

⁵ Event⁶ Scarcely
⁷ More

	I will no thing, mine owen lord so deai, Right as you list, govcineth this mattere'	8197
¹ Confer ence ² Knowest	'Then will I,' quod this maiquis softly, 'That in thy chamber, I, and thou, and she, Have a collatioun, ¹ and wost ² thou why? For I will ask her, if it hei will be To be my wife, and iule hei after me And all this shall be done in thy preséce, I will not speak out of thine audiéce'	
³ Before	And in the chamber, while they were about The treaty, which as ye shall after hear, The people came into the house without, ~ And wonder'd them, in how honést mannée Attentively she kept hei fateri dear But utterly Gnsildis wonder might, For never cist ³ no saw she such a sight	8210
⁴ Accus tomed ⁵ Dismiss ⁶ True	No wonder is though that she be astoned, To see so gíeat a guest come in that place, She never was to no such guestes woned, ⁴ For which she looked with full pale face But shortly forth this matter foi to chase, ⁵ These are the wordes that the maiquis said To this benigne, very, ⁶ faithful maid	
⁷ Consider	'Gnsild,' he said, 'ye shall well understand, It liketh to your fateri and to me, That I you wed, and eke it may so stand As I suppose, ye will that it so be But these demandes ask I fírst (quod he) That since it shall be done in hasty wise, Will ye assent, or elles you avise?' ⁷	8220

'I say this, be ye ready with good heart 8227
 To all my lust,¹ and that I freely may
 As me best thinketh, do² you laugh or smart,
 And never ye to grutchen,³ night nor day,
 And eke when I say Yea, ye say not Nay,
 Neither by word, nor frowning countenance?
 Swear this, and here I swear our allhance'

¹ Pleasure² Cause³ Murmur

Wond'ring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
 She saide, 'Loid, indign and unworthy
 Am I, to thilk⁴ honour, that ye me bede,⁵
 But as ye will yourself, right so will I
 And here I swear, that never willingly
 In work, nor thought, I n'll you disobey
 For to be dead, though me were loth to dey'⁶ 8240

⁴ This⁵ Offer⁶ Die

'This is enough, Gusilda mine,' quod he
 And forth he go'th with a full sober cheer,
 Out at the door, and after then came she,
 And to the people he said in this mannere
 'This is my wife,' quod he, 'that standeth here
 Honoureth her, and loveth her, I pray,
 Whoso me loveth, there n'is no more to say'

And for that nothing of her olde gear
 She shoulde bring into his house, he bade
 That women should despoilen her right there, 8250
 Of which these ladies weren nothing glad
 To handle her clothes wherein she was clad
 But natheless this maiden bight of hue
 From foot to head they clothed have all new

Her haares have they kempt, that lay untress'd
 Full rudely, and with their fingers small

<p>¹ Scarcely</p>	<p>A coroune on her head they have ydressed, And set hei full of nouches gicat and small Of hei array what should I make a tale? Unneth¹ the people her knew for hei faunness, When she transmewed was in such richess</p>	8257
<p>² Delayed</p>	<p>This marquis hath hei spoused with a ring Brought for the same cause, and then hei set Upon a horse snow-white, and well ambling, And to his palace, ere he longer let,² (With joyful people, that hei led and met,) Conveyed her, and thus the day they spend In revel, till the sunne 'gan descend.</p>	8270
<p>³ Where</p>	<p>And shortly forth this tale for to chase, I say, that to this newe marchioness God hath such favou sent hei of his grace, That it ne seemeth not by likelness That she was born and fed in rudeness, As in a cot, or in an ox's stall, But nourish'd in an emperoure's hall</p>	8270
<p>⁴ Scarcely believed</p>	<p>To every wight she waxen is so dear, And worshipful, that folk there³ she was boie, And from her bnthe knew her year by year, Unnethes trowed⁴ they, but durst have swore, That to Janicle, of which I spake before, She daughter n'as,⁵ for as by conjecture Them thought she was another creature.</p>	8280
<p>⁶ Qualities</p>	<p>For though that ever virtuous was she, She was increased in such excellence Of thewes⁶ good, yset in high bounty, And so discreet, and fair of eloquence</p>	

So benign, and so digne of reuerence,
 And coulede so the people's heart embrace,
 That each hei lov'th that looketh on hei face

8287

Not only of Saluces in the town
 Published was the bounty of her name,
 But eke beside in many a region,
 If one saith well, another saith the same.
 So spieadeth of hei high bounty the fame,
 That men and women, young as well as old,
 Go to Saluces upon hei to behold

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
 Wedded with fortunate honestety,¹
 In Godde's peace liveth full easily
 At home, and grace enough outward had
 he

¹ Virtue.

8300

And for he saw that under low degree
 Was honest virtue hid, the people him held
 A prudent man, and that is seen full seld²

² Seldom

Not only this Gaisildis through her wit
 Could all the feat³ of wifely homeliness,
 But eke when that the case requied it,
 The common profit coulede she redress
 There n'as discord, rancour, ne heaviness
 In all the land, that she ne could appease,
 And wisely bring them all in heartes ease

³ Act, performance

8310

Though that hei husband absent were or non,
 If gentlemen, or other of that country
 Were wioth, she woulde bringen them at one,
 So wise and ripe wordes hadde she,
 And judgement of so great equity,

¹ Thought That she from heaven sent was, as men wend,¹ 8316
People to save, and every wrong t' amend

Not longe time after that this Gūsild'
Was wedded, she a daughter hath ybore,
² Rather All had her levei² have boin a knave³ child 8320
³ Male Glad was the marquis and his folk therfore,
For though a maiden child come all before,
She may unto a knave child attain
By likelihood, since she n'is not bairien

PARS TERTIA

There fell, as it befalleth times mo,
⁴ Little When that his child had sucked but a throw,⁴
while This marquis in his hearte longed so
⁵ Stead To tempt his wife, hei sadness⁵ for to know,
fastness That he ne might out of his hearte throw
⁶ Try This marvellous desne his wife t' assay,⁶ 8330
⁷ Alarm, Needless, God wot, he thought hei to affiay⁷
disturb

He had assayed hei enough before,
And found her ever good, what needeth it
Hei for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though some men praise it for a subtle wit,
⁸ Ill befits But as for me, I say that evil it fit⁸
T' assay a wife when that it is no need,
And putten her in anguish and in diede

For when this marquis wrought in this manneie,
He came a-night alone there as she lay, 8340
With sterne face, and with full troubled chere,⁹
⁹ Countenance And saide thus, 'Gūsild', (quod he,) that day
That I you took out of your pooi aray,

And put you in estate of high nobless,
Ye have it not forgotten, as I guess

8344

'I say, Grisild', this present dignity,
In which that I have put you, as I trow,¹
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you took in poor estate full low,
For any weal ye must yourselven know
Take heed of every word that I you say,
There is no wight that heareth it but we tway²

8350

'Ye wot yourself well how that ye came here
Into this house, it is not long ago,
And though to me ye be right lief³ and dear,
Unto my gentles ye be nothing so
They say, to them it is great shame and woe
For to be subjects, and be in servage
To thee, that born art of a small lineage

'And namely, since thy daughter was ybore,
These wordes have they spoken doubteless;
But I desue, as I have done before,
To live my life with them in rest and peace
I may not in this case be reckeless,
I must do with thy daughter for the best,
Not as I would, but as my gentles lest⁴

8360

'And yet, God wot, this is full loth to me
But natheless withouten your weeting⁵
I will nought do, but thus will I (quod he)
That ye to me assenten in this thing
Shew now your patience in your working,
That ye me light⁶ and swore in your village
The day that maked was our marriage'

8370

¹ Believe² Two³ Pleasant⁴ Please⁵ Knowing⁶ Pro-
mised

¹ Moved	<p>When she had heard all this, she not amended¹ Neither in word, in cheer, nor countenance, (For as it seemed, she was not aggrieved, She saide, 'Lord, all li'th in your pleasance, My child and I, with hearty obeisance</p>	8375
² Destroy	<p>Be youres all, and ye may save or spill,² Your owen thing worketh after your will</p> <p>'There may no thing, so God my soule save, Like unto you, that may displeasen me Nor I desue nothing for to have, Nor dreade for to lose, save only ye This will is in mine heart, and aye shall be, No length of time, or death may this deface, Nor change my courage³ to another place'</p>	8380
⁴ Mien	<p>Glad was this marquis for her answering, But yet he feigned as he were not so, All dreary was his cheere⁴ and his looking, When that he should out of the chamber go Soon after this, a furlong way or two, He privily hath told all his intent Unto a man, and to his wife him sent</p>	8390
⁵ Kind of	<p>A manner⁵ sergeant was this private man, The which he faithful often founden had In thinges great, and eke such folk well can Do execution on thinges bad</p>	
⁶ Dreaded	<p>The lord knew well, that he him loved and diad⁶ And when this sergeant wist his lorde's will, Into the chamber he stalked him full still</p> <p>'Madam,' he said, 'ye must forgive it me, Though I do thing, to which I am constrain'd</p>	8400

Ye be so wise, that right well knowen ye, 8404
 That loides' hestes¹ may not be yfeign'd,
 They may well be bewailed and complain'd,
 But men must needes to their lust² obey,
 And so will I, there n'is no more to say

¹ Com-
mands

² Pleasure

'This child I am commanded for to take'
 And spake no more, but out the child he hent³ 8410
 Despiteously,⁴ and 'gan a chere⁵ to make,
 As though he would have slain it, ere he went
 Gwyltdis must all suffer and all consent
 And as a lamb, she sitteth meek and still,
 And let this cruel sergeant do his will

³ Took

⁴ Unpit-
tingly
⁵ Demea-
mour

Suspicious was the diffame⁶ of this man,
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
 Suspect the time in which he thus began
 Alas! her daughter, that she loved so,
 She ween'd he would have slayen it right tho,⁷ 8420
 But natheless she neither wept nor siked,⁸
 Conforming her to that the marquis liked

⁶ Bad re-
putation

⁷ Then.

⁸ Sighed

But at the last to speken she began,
 And meekely she to the sergeant pray'd
 (So as⁹ he was a worthy gentle man)
 That she might kiss her child, ere that it deid¹⁰
 And in her barme¹¹ this little child she leid,¹²
 With full sad face, and 'gan the child to bliss,
 And lulled it, and after 'gan it kiss

⁹ As
though
¹⁰ Died
¹¹ Lap
¹² Laid

And thus she said in her benigne voice 8430
 'Farewell, my child, I shall thee never see,
 But since I have thee marked with the cross,
 Of thilk¹³ father, yblessed may thou be,

¹³ That

¹ Com mend to	That for us died upon a cross of tree Thy soule, little child, I him betake, ¹ For this night shalt thou dien for my sake'	8434
² Believe ³ Nurse ⁴ Object of pity	I trow ² that to a nounce ³ in this case It had been hard this ruthe ⁴ for to see Well might a mother then have cried, Alas! But natheless so sad steadfást was she, That she endured all adversity, And to the sergeant meekely she said, 'Have here again your little younge maid	8440
⁵ Com- mand ⁶ Unless ⁷ Least ⁸ Tcar	'Go now (quod she) and do my loide's hest ⁵ And one thing would I pray you of your grace, But ⁶ if my lord forbade you at the lest, ⁷ Bury this little body in some place, That beastes ne no brides it to-iace' ⁸ But he no word to that purpóse would say, But took the child and went upon his way	8450
⁹ Demea- nour	This sergeant came unto his lord again, And of Gwilda's wordes and her chere ⁹ He told him point for point, in short and plain, And him presented with his daughter deai Somewhat this lord hath ruth in his mannéie, But natheless his purpose held he still, As lordes do, when they will have their will,	
¹⁰ Strike	And bade this seigeant that he prively Shoulde this child full softe wind and wrap, With alle circumstances tenderly, And carry it in a coffei, or in a lap, But upon pain his head off for to swap ¹⁰	8460

That no man shoulde know of his intent, 8463
Nor whence he came, nor whither that he went,

But at Bologn', unto his sister dear,
That thilke tyme of Pavie was Countess,
He should it take, and shew her this mattére,
Beseeching hei to do hei business
This child to foster in all gentleness,
And whose child that it was he bade hei hide 8470
From every wight, for ought that may betide

This sergeant go'th, and hath fuffill'd this thing
But to this marquis now returne we,
For now go'th he full fast imagining,
If by his wife's cheere¹ he mighte see, 1 Demen-
Or by hei wordes appeerceive, that she nour
Were changed, but he never could her find, 2 Steadfast
But ever in one ahke sad² and kind

As glad, as humble, as busy in service
And eke in love, as she was wont to be, 8480
Was she to him, in every manner wise,³ 3 Sort of
Nor of hei daughter not a word spake she way
No accident for no adversity
Was seen in her, ne never her daughter's name
Ne nevened⁴ she, for earnest nor for game 4 Uttered

PARS QUARTA.

In this estate there passed been four year
Ere she with childe was, but, as God wold,
A knave child she bare by this Waltere
Full graciously, and fair for to behold
And when that folk it to his father told, 8490

¹ Praise	Not only he, but all his country merry Was for this child, and God they thank and hery ¹	8461
² Inclination	When it was two year old, and from the breast Departed of his nourice, on a day This marquis caughte yet another lest ² To tempt his wife yet offer, if he may	
³ Trial	Oh! needless was she tempted in assay, ³ But wedded men ne connen ⁴ no measure, When that they find a patient creature.	
⁴ Know	‘Wife,’ quod this marquis, ‘ye have heard ere this My people sickly bearen our mariage,	8501
⁵ Born	And namely since my son yboren ⁵ is, Now is it worse than ever in all our age The murmur slay’th mine heart and my courage, For to mine ears cometh the voice so smart, That it well nigh destroyed hath mine heart	
⁶ Doubt	‘Now say they thus, “When Walter is agone, Then shall the blood of Janicle succeed, And be our lord, for other have we none ” Such wordes say my people, it is no dede ⁶	8510
Complain	Well ought I of such murmur taken heed, For certainly I dread all such sentence, Though they not plainen ⁷ in mine audience	
⁸ Before	‘I woulde live in peace, if that I might Wherefore I am disposed utterly, As I his sister served ere ⁸ by night, Right so think I to seive him privily This wain I you, that ye not suddenly	
⁹ Become outrageous	Out of yourself for no woe should outrage, ⁹ Be patient, and thereof I you pray’	8520

'I have,' quod she, 'said thus and ever shall, 8521
 I will no thing, ne nill no thing certain,
 But as you list not grieveth me at all,
 Though that my daughter and my son be slain
 At your commandement that is to sayn,
 I have not had no part of childien twain,
 But first sickness, and after woe and pain.

'Ye be my lord, do with your owen thing
 Right as you list, asketh no rede¹ of me: 8530
 For as I left at home all my clothing
 When I came first to you, right so (quod she)
 Left I my will and all my liberty,
 And took your clothing wherefore I you pray,
 Do your pleasance, I will your lust² obey. 8540

'And certes, if I hadde prescience
 Your will to know, ere ye your lust me told,
 I would it do withouten negligence:
 But now I wot your lust, and what ye wold,
 All your pleasance firm and stable I hold;
 For wist I that my death might do you ease, 8540
 Right gladly would I dien, you to please.

'Death may not maken no comparisoun
 Unto your love' And when this marquis say³ 8550
 The constance of his wife, he cast adown
 His eyen two, and wond'reth how she may
 In patience suffer all this array.
 And forth he goth with dreary countenance,
 But to his heart it was full great pleasance.

This ugly sergeant in the same wise
 That he her daughter caughte, right so he 8550

¹ Taken ² Unvary- ingly ³ Demea- nour	<p>(O! woise, if men can any worse devise,) 8551 Hath hent¹ hei son, that full was of beauty. And ever in one² so patiént was she, That she no cheie³ made of heaviness, But kiss'd hei son and after 'gan it bless</p>
⁴ Cared	<p>Save this she prayed him, if that he might, Hei little son he would in earthe grave, His tender limbes, delicate to sight, From fowles and from beastes for to save. But she none answer of him mighte have, 8560 He went his way, as him no thing ne rought,⁴ But to Bologn' he tenderly it brought</p>
⁵ Thought ⁶ Com- posed	<p>This maquis wond'roth ever longer the more Upon her patiéce, and if that he Ne hadde soothly knowen therebefore, That perfectly her childien loved she, He would have ween'd⁵ that of some subtilty And of malíce, or for cruel couráge, That she had suffer'd this with sad⁶ viságe</p>
⁷ Cease.	<p>But well he knew, that next himself, certain 8570 She loved her childien best in every wise. But now of women would I asken fain, If these assayes mighten not suffice? What could a study husband more devise To prove her wifehood, and her steadfastness, And he continuing ever in sturdiness?</p> <p>But there be folk of such conditiún, That when they have a certain purpose take, They cannot stint⁷ of their intention, But, right as they were bounden to a stake, 8580</p>

They will not of then firste purpose slake :
 Right so this maiquis fully hath purposed
 To tempt his wife, as he was first disposed.

8581

He waiteth, if by word or countenance
 That she to him was changed of couaige.¹
 But never could he finden variance,
 She was aye one in heart and in viságe,
 And aye the further that she was in age,
 The more true (if that it were possible)
 She was to him in love, and more penible²

¹ Spirit

8590

² Pains-
taking

For which it seemed thus, that of them two
 There was but one will, for as Walter lest,³
 The same lust⁴ was her pleasánce also,
 And God be thanked, all fell for the best
 She shewed well, for no worldly unrest
 A wife, as of herself, no thing ne should
 Will in effect, but as her husband would.

³ Pleased⁴ Pleasure

The slander of Walter wonder wide spriad,
 That of a cruel heart he wickedly,
 For⁵ he a poore woman wedded had,
 Hath murder'd both his children prively.
 Such mumur was among them commonly
 No wonder is for to the people's ear
 There came no word, but that they murder'd
 were

8600

⁵ Because

For which thereas⁶ his people therefore
 Had loved him well, the slander of his diffame⁷
 Made them that they him hateden therefore.
 To be a murderer is a hateful name.
 But natheless, for earnest nor for game,

⁶ Whereas⁷ Evil
report

¹ Would
not stop

He of his cruel purpose n'olde stent,¹
To tempt his wife was set all his intent.

8610

² Messen-
ger

When that his daughter twelve year was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtile wise
Informed of his will, sent his messáge,²
Commanding him, such billes to devise,
As to his cruel purpose may suffice,
How that the Pope, as for his people's rest,
³ Pleased Bade him to wed another, if him lest ³

⁴ Leave

I say he bade they shoulde counterfeit
The Pope's bulles, making mention
That he hath leave his firste wife to lete,⁴
As by the Pope's dispensation,

8620

⁵ Stay

To stanten⁵ rancour and dissension
Betwixt his people and him thus spake the bull,
The which they have published at the full.

⁶ Steadfast

The rude people, as no wonder is,
Ween'den full well, that it had been right so.
But when these tidings came to Gúisildis,
I deeme that her heart was full of woe,
But she alike sad⁶ for evermo
Disposed was, this humble créature,
The adversity of fortune all to endure;

8630

⁷ Suffi-
ciency

Abiding ever his lust and his pleasance,
To whom that she was given, heart and all,
As to her very worldly suffisance⁷
But shortly if this story tell I shall,
This marquis written hath in special
A letter, in which he sheweth his intent,
And secretly he to Bologn' it sent,

To the Earl of Pavie, which that hadde tho¹ 8640 ¹ Then
 Wedded his sister, pray'd he specially
 To bringen home again his childien two
 In honouable estate all openly
 But one thing he him prayed utterly,
 That he to no wight, though men would inquire,
 Shoulde not tell whose children that they were,

But say, the maiden should ywedded be
 Unto the Marquis of Salúce' anon
 And as this earl was prayed, so did he,
 For at day set he on his way is gone 8650
 Toward Salúce', and lordes many one
 In rich array, this maiden foi to guide,
 Her younge brother riding her beside.

Arrayed was towárd her marriage
 This freshe maiden, full of gemmes clear,
 Her brother, which that seven year was of age,
 Arrayed eke full fiesh in his mannére
 And thus in great nobless and with glad cheer
 Towárd Saluces shaping their jounáy
 From day to day they riden in their way. 8660

PARS QUINTA.

Among all this, after his wick'd uságe,
 This marquis yet his wife to tempten more
 To the uttereste proof of her couáge,
 Fully to have experience and loie,²
 If that she were as steadfast as before,
 He on a day in open audience
 Full boist'rously hath said here this sentence.

² Know-
ledge

‘Certes, Gislel¹, I had enough pleasance
To have you to my wife, for your goodness,
And for your truth, and for your obeisance,
Not for your lineage, nor for your riches,
But now know I in very soothfastness,
That in great lordship, if I me well advise,
There is great servitude in sundry wise.

8668

‘I may not do, as every ploughman may:
My people me constraineth for to take
Another wife, and every day by day,
And eke the Pope, rancour for to slake
Consenteth it, that dare I undertake
And truly, thus much I will you say,
My newe wife is coming by the way

8680

¹ The
same

‘Be strong of heart, and void anon her place,
And thilke¹ dower that ye broughten me
Take it again, I grant it of my grace
Returneth to your father’s house, (quod he,)
No man may alway have prosperity
² Counsel With even heart I rede² you to endure
The stroke of fortune, or of aventure’

² Counsel

And she again answer’d in patience
‘My Lord,’ quod she, ‘I wot, and wist alway,
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my povert’ no wight ne can nor may
Maken comparison, it is no nay,³
I ne’ held me never digne⁴ in no mannere
To be your wife, nor yet your chamberere⁵

8690

³ Not to be
denied

⁴ Worthy

⁵ Chamber
maid.

‘And in this house, there ye me lady made,
(The highe God take I for my witness,

And all so wisly¹ he my soule glad,)
 I never held me lady nor mistiess,
 But humble servant to your worthiness,
 And ever shall, while that my life may dure,
 Aboven every worldly creature

8698 ¹ Surely

‘That ye so long of your benignity
 Have holden me in honour and nobley,²
 Whereas I was not worthy for to be,
 That thank I God and you, to whom I pray
 Foryield it you, there is no more to say
 Unto my father gladly will I wend,³
 And with him dwell unto my life's end;

² Nobility³ Go

‘There I was foster'd of a child full small,
 Till I be dead my life there will I lead,
 A widow clean in body, heart and all
 For since I gave to you my maidenhede,
 And am your true wife, it is no drede,⁴
 God shelde⁵ such a lorde's wife to take
 Another man to husband or to make⁶

8710

⁴ Doubt⁵ Forbid.⁶ Mate

‘And of your newe wife, God of his grace
 So grant you weale and prosperity
 For I will gladly yelden her my place,
 In which that I was blissful wont to be
 For since it liketh you, my Loid, (quod she,)
 That whilom weren all mine hearte's rest,
 That I shall go, I will go when you lest.⁷

8720

⁷ Please

‘But thereas⁸ ye me proffer such dowāne
 As I first brought, it is well in my mind,
 It were my wretched clothes, nothing fair,
 The which to me were hard now for to find

⁸ Whereas

	O goode God! how gentle and how kind Ye seemed by your speech and your viságe, The day that makéd was ouȝt maíniage!	8728
¹ At all events	‘But sooth is said, algate ¹ I find it true, For in effect it proved is on me, Love is not old, as when that it is new. But certes, Lord, for no adversitey To dien in this case, it shall not be That ever in word or work I shall repent, That I you gave mine heaȝt in whole intent.	
² Doubt	‘My Lord, ye wot, that in my father’s place Ye did me strip out of my poore weed, And richely ye clad me of your gráce, To you brought I nought elles out of diede, ² But faith, and nakedness, and maidenhede, And here again your clothing I restore, And eke your wedding íng for evermore.	8740
³ Check fully	‘The remnant of your jewels ready be Within your chamber, I dare it safely sayn. Naked out of my father’s house, (quod she,) I came, and naked I must turn again All your pleasance would I follow fain ³ But yet I hope it be not your intent, That I smockléss out of your palace went	8750
⁴ Dishon- ourable	‘Ye could not do so dishonést ⁴ a thing, That thilke womb, in which your children lay, Shoulde before the people, in my walking, Be seen all bare wherefore I you pray Let me not like a worm go by the way.	

Remember you, mine owen Lord so dear, 8757
I was your wife, though I unworthy were

‘Wherefore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
Which that I brought and not again I bear,
As vouchesafe to give me to my meed
But such a smock as I was wont to wear,
That I therewith may wrie¹ the womb of her 1 Cover
That was your wife and here I take my leave
Of you, mine owen Lord, lest I you grieve’

‘The smock,’ quod he, ‘that thou hast on thy back,
Let it be still, and bear it forth with thee’
But well unnethes² thilke³ word he spake, 2 Scarcely
But went his way for ruth and for pity 3 This
Before the folk herselfen stuppeth she, 8770
And in her smock, with foot and head all bare,
Toward her father’s house forth is she fare⁴ 4 Gone

The folk her followen weeping in their way,
And fortune aye they cursen as they gon
But she from weeping kept her eyen drey,
Nor in this time word ne spake she none
Her father, that this tidings heard anon,
Curseth the day and time, that nature
Shope⁵ him to be a living creature 5 Formed

For out of doubt this olde poore man 8780
Was ever in suspect of her marriage
For ever he deemed, since it first began,
That when the lord fulfill’d had his courage,⁶ 6 Inclina-
Him woulde think it were a disparage tion
To his estate, so low for to alight,
And voiden her as soon as ever he might.

¹ To meet

Again¹ his daughter hastily go'th he,
 (For he by noise of folk knew hei coming.)
 And with hei olde coat, as it might be,
 He coverieth hei full sorrowfully weeping
 But on hei body might he it not bring,
 For rude was the cloth, and more of age
 By dayes fele² than at hei marriage

8787

² Many

Thus with her father for a certain space
 Dwelleth this flower of wifely patiéce,
 That neither by hei wordes nor her face,
 Before the folk, noi eke in their absence,
 Ne shewed she that her was done offence,
 Noi of her high estate no rémembriance
 Ne hadde she, as by hei countenance

8800

³ Spirit
⁴ Full

No wonder is, for in her great estate
 Her ghost³ was ever in plein⁴ humility,
 No tender mouth, no hearte delicate,
 No pompe, no semblánt of royalty,
 But full of patiént benignity,
 Discreet, and prideless, aye honouráble,
 And to her husband ever meek and stable

⁵ Little

Men speak of Job, and most for his humbless,
 As clerkes, when them list, can well indite,
 Namely of men, but as in soothfastness,
 Though clerkes praisen women but a lite,⁵
 There can no man in humbless him acquite
 As woman can, nor can be half so true
 As women be,—but it be fall of new *

8810

* 'But it be fall of new ' Unless it be lately come to pass.

PARS SEXTA.

From Bologn' is this Earl of Pavie come, 8815
 Of which the fame up sprang to more and less
 And to the people's eares all and some
 Was couth¹ eke, that a newe marchioness
 He with him brought, in such pomp and richness,
 That never was there seen with manne's eye
 So noble array in all West Lombardy

¹ Known

The marquis, which that shope² and knew all this,
 Ere that this Earl was come, sent his messáge³
 For thilke poore sely⁴ Gúildis,
 And she with humble heart and glad viságe,
 Not with no swollen thought in her couráge,⁵
 Came at his hest,⁶ and on her knees her set,
 And reverently and wisely she him gret⁷

² Contriv
 ed
³ Messen
 ger
⁴ Simple
⁵ Mind⁶ Order⁷ Greeted.

'Gúildis,' quod he, 'my will is utterly,
 This maiden, that shall wedded be to me, 8830
 Received be to-morrow as royally
 As it possible is in mine house to be
 And eke that every wight in his degree
 Have his estate in sitting and seivíce,
 And high pleasánce, as I can best devise

I have no woman suffisant, certain,
 The chambers for t' array in ordnance
 After my lust,⁸ and therefore would I fain,
 That thine were all such manner governance.
 Thou knowest eke of old all my pleasánce, 8840
 Though thine aray be bad, and evil besey,⁹
 Do thou thy devoir at the leaste way¹⁰

⁸ Pleasure
⁹ Beseeem
¹⁰ In the
 quickest
 manner

	<p>‘Not only, Loid, that I am glad,’ quod she, 8843 ‘To do youi lust, but I desue also You foi to seive and please in my degree, Withouten fainting, and shall evermo Ne never for no weal, nor for no woe, ¹ Cense Ne shall the ghost withun mine heaite stent¹ To love you best with all my true intent’</p>
² Arrange	<p>And with that word she ’gan the house to dight,² And tables foi to set, and beddes make, 8851 And pained hei to do all that she might, Praying the chambereres for Godde’s sake To hasten them, and faste sweep and shake, And she the moste serviceable of all Hath every chamber arayed, and his hall</p>
³ Nine o’clock	<p>Abouten undern³ ’gan this Earl alight, That with him brought these noble childien tway, For which the people ran to see the sight ⁴ Besecm Of then aray, so richely besey⁴ 8860 ⁵ First And then at eist⁵ amonges them they say, ⁶ Please That Walter was no fool, though that him lest⁶ To change his wife, for it was for the best</p>
	<p>For she is fairer, as they deemen all, Than is Grisild’, and more tender of age, And fairer fruit between them shoulde fall, And more pleasánt foi her high lineage Her brother eke so fair was of viságe, That them to see the people hath caught pleasánce, Commending now the marquis’ governance 8870</p>
⁷ Un steady ⁸ Vane	<p>‘O stormy people, unsad⁷ and ever untrue, And undisciet, and changing as a fane,⁸</p>

Delighting ever in lombel¹ that is new, 8873 ¹ Rumour
 For like the moone waxen ye and wane
 Aye full of clapping, dear enough a jane,² ² A small
 Your doom³ is false, your constance evil preveth,⁴ ³ Judg-
 A full great fool is he that on you 'heveth' ⁴ Proveth

Thus saiden sade⁵ folk in that city, ⁵ Sedate
 When that the people gazed up and down,
 For they were glad, right for the novelty, 8880
 To have a newe lady of their town
 No more of this make I now mentioun,
 But to Grisild' again I will me dress,
 And tell her constance, and her business

Full busy was Grisild' in every thing,
 That to the feaste was appertinent;
 Right naught was she abaist⁶ of her clothing, ⁶ Ashamed
 Though it were rude, and somedeal eke to-rent,
 But with glad chere⁷ to the gate is went ⁷ Mien
 With other folk, to greet the marchioness, 8890
 And after that doth forth hei business

With so glad cheer his gwestes she receiveth
 And conningly⁸ evereach in his degree, ⁸ Cleverly
 That no defaulte no man appercerveth,
 But aye they wond'ien what she mighte be,
 That in so poor array was for to see,
 And coude such honour and reverence,
 And worthily they praisen hei prudence.

In all this meane while she ne stent⁹ ⁹ Ceased.
 This maid and eke her brother to commend 8900
 With all her heart in full benign intent,
 So well, that no man could her praise amend.

¹ Go	But at the last when that these lordes wend ¹ To sitten down to meat, he 'gan to call Grisild', as she was busy in the hall	8908
² Faith	'Grisild', (quod he, as it were in his play,) How liketh thee my wife, and hei beauty?' 'Right well, my Lord,' quod she, 'for in good fay, ² A fainer saw I never none than she I pray to God give you prosperity, And so I hope, that he will to you send Plesance enough unto your lives' end	8910
³ Me	'One thing beseech I you, and warn also, That ye ne picke with no tórimenting This tender maiden, as ye have done mo ³ For she is foster'd in her nourishing More tenderly, and to my supposing She mighte not adversity endure, As could a poore foster'd créature.'	
⁴ Steadfast	And when this Walter saw her patiéce, Hei glade cheer, and no malice at all, And he so often had her done offence, And she aye sad ⁴ and constant as a wall, Continuing ever her innocence o'er all,	8920
⁵ Prepare	This study marquis 'gan his hearte dress ⁵ To rue upon hei wifely steadfastness	
⁶ Reward ed	'This is enough, Grisilda mine,' quod he, 'Be now no more aghast, nor evil apaid, ⁶ I have thy faith and thy benignity, As well as ever woman was, assay'd In great estate, and poorely array'd	8930

Now know I, deare wife, thy steadfastness,['] 8932
And hei in aimés took, and 'gan to kiss.

And she for wonder took of it no keep,¹
She hearde not what thing he to her said.

¹ Notice

She faied as she had start out of a sleep,

Till she out of her mazedness abiaid²

² Awoke

'Grisild,' quod he, 'by God that for us dey'd,

Thou art my wife, none other I ne have,

Ne never had, as God my soule save 8940

'This is thy daughter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wife, that other faithfully

Shall be mine heir, as I have aye disposed;

Thou bare them of thy body truly

At Bologn' have I kept them privily.

Take them again, for now may'st thou not say,

That thou hast lorn³ none of thy children tway

³ Lost

'And folk, that otherwise have said of me,
I warn them well, that I have done this deed

For no malice, ne for no cruelty, 8950

But for t' assay in thee thy womanhede

And not to slay my children (God forbede)

But for to keep them privily and still,

Till I thy purpose knew, and all thy will'

When she this heard, aswoone down she falleth

For piteous joy, and after her swooning

She both her younge children to her calleth,

And in her armes piteously weeping

Embraceth them, and tenderly kissing

Full like a mother with her salte tears 8960

She bathed both their visage and their heres⁴

⁴ Hair

¹ What	O, which ¹ a piteous thing it was to see Her swooning, and her humble voice to hear! ' <i>Gr and mercy</i> , Lord, God thank it you, (quod she,) That ye have saved me my children dear	8962
² Care	Now reck ² I never to be dead right here, Since I stand in your love, and in your grace,	
³ No matter for	No force ³ of death, nor when my spirit pace ⁴	
⁴ Departs		
⁵ Believed firmly	'O tender, O dear, O younge children mine, Your woful mother weened steadfastly, ⁵ That cruel houndes, or some foul vermin Had eaten you, but God of his mercy, And your benigne father tenderly	8970
⁶ Caused	Hath done ⁶ you keep ' and in that same stound ⁷	
⁷ Instant	All suddenly she swapt ⁸ adown to ground	
⁸ Fell		
⁹ Firmly	And in her swoon so sadly ⁹ holdeth she Her children two, when she 'gan them embrace,	
¹⁰ Art	That with great sleight ¹⁰ and great difficulty	
¹¹ Pluck	The children from her arm they 'gan apace ¹¹ O! many a tear on many a piteous face	8980
¹² Scarcely	Down ran of them that stooden her beside, Unnethe ¹² abouten her might they abide.	
¹³ Company	Walter her gladdeth, and her sorrow slaketh; She riseth up abashed from her trance, And every wight her joy and feaste maketh, Till she hath caught again her countenance. Walter her doth so faithfully pleasance, That it was dainty for to see the cheer Betwixt them two, since they been met in feire. ¹³	
¹⁴ Saw	These ladies, when that they their time sey, ¹⁴ Have taken her, and into chamber gone,	8990

And strippen her out of her rude array, 8992
 And in a cloth of gold that brighte shone,
 With a coroune of many a riche stone
 Upon her head, they into hall her brought.
 And there she was honoured as her ought.

Thus hath this piteous day a blissful end;
 For every man and woman doth his might
 This day in muth and revel to dispend,
 Till on the welkin shone the staries bright. 9000
 For more solemn in every manne's sight
 This feaste was, and greater of costage,
 Than was the revel of her marriage.

Full many a year in high prosperity
 Liven these two in concord and in rest,
 And richely his daughter married he
 Unto a lord, one of the worthiest
 Of all Itaille, and then in peace and rest
 His wife's father in his court he keepeth,
 Till that the soul out of his body creepeth 9010

His son succeedeth in his heritage,
 In rest and peace, after his father's day:
 And fortunate was eke in marriage,
 All¹ put he not his wife in great assay:
 This world is not so strong, it is no nay,²
 As it hath been in olde times yore,
 And heark'neth, what this author saith therefore

¹ Al-
 though
² Not to be
 "denied.

This story is said, not for that wives should
 Follow Grisild' as in humilty,
 For it were importable,³ though they would; 9020
 But for that every wight in his degree

³ Intole-
 rable

Shoulde be constant in adversy,
As was Grisilda, therfore Petiaich writeth
This story, which with high style he' inditeth

9022

For since a woman was so patient
Unto a mortal man, well more we ought
¹ Good-will Receiven all in gree¹ that God us sent.
For great skill² is he proved that he wrought
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As saith Saint James, if ye his 'pistle read ,
² Doubt He proveth folk all day, it is no drede ²

9030

And suff'ieth us, as for our exercise,
With sharpe scourges of adversy
Full often to be beat in sundy wise,
Not for to know our will, for certes he,
Ere we were born, knew all our fraleyty,
And for our best is all his governance;
Let us then live in virtuous sufferance

But one word, Lordings, heark'neth, ere I go
It were full hard to finden now-a-days
In all a town Grisildas thre or two
For if that they were put to such assays,
³ Alloys The gold of them hath now so bad allays³
With brass, that though the com be fair at eye,
⁴ Break It woulde rather brast⁴ a-two than ple⁵
⁵ Bend. *

9040

For which here, for the wife's love of Bath,
Whose life and all her secte God maintene
⁶ Damage In high mast'ly, and elles were it scath,⁶
I will with lusty hearte fresh and green,
Say you a song to gladden you, I ween

905

* 'For great skill' He who does so is proved to possess great skill

And let us stint of earnestful mattée 9051
Heak'neth my song, that saith in this mannère

Grisild' is dead, and eke hei patience,
And both at ones buried in Itaille
For which I cry in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be t' assail
His wife's patiènce, in trust to find
Grisilda's, for in certain he shall fail

O noble wives, full of high prudence,
Let no humility your tongues nail 9060
Ne let no clerk have cause of diligence
To write of you a story of such maivail,
As of Grisilda patiènt and kind,
Lest Chichevache you swallow in her entail

Followeth Echo, that holdeth no silence,
But ever answereth at the countertaille ¹
Be not bedaffed² for your innocence,
But sharply taketh on you the governaille ³
Imprinteth well this lesson in your mind,
For common profit, since it may avail 9070

Ye archewives,⁴ stand'th aye at defence,
Since ye be strong, as is a great camail,⁵
Ne suff'reth not that men do you offence
And slender wives, feeble as in battail,
Be eager as is a tiger yond' in Ind,
Aye clappeth as a mill, I you counsail

Ne dread them not, do them no reverence,
For though thine husband armed be in mail,
The arrows of thy crabbed eloquence

¹ Counter
tally
² Befooled
³ Helm

⁴ Wives of
rank
⁵ Camel

¹ Forepart
of ar-
mour
² Advise

Shall pierce his breast, and eke his aventail.¹ 9080
In jealousy I rede² eke thou him bind,
And thou shalt make him couch as doth a quail

³ Lime-
tree

If thou be fau, there folk be in picesence
Shew thou thy visage, and thine apparail
If thou be foul, be free of thy dispense,
To get thee friendes aye do thy travail
Be aye of cheer as light as leaf on lind,³
And let him care, and weep, and wing, and wail

THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE.

'WEEPING and wailing, care and other sorrow 9089
 I have enough, on even and on morrow,
 Quod the Merchánt, 'and so have other mo,
 That wedded be, I trow that it be so.
 For well I wot it faeth so by me
 I have a wife, the woiste that may be,
 For though the fiend to her ycoupled were,.
 She would him overmatch, I dare well swear.
 What should I you rehearse in special
 Her high malice² she is a shrew at all
 'There is a long and a large difference
 Betwixt Grisilda's grete patience, 9100
 And of my wife the passing cruelty.
 Were I unbounden, all so may I the,¹
 I woulde never eft² come in the snare
 We wedded men live in sorrow and care,
 Assay it whoso will, and he shall find
 That I say sooth, by Saint Thomas of Ind,
 As for the more part, I say not all;
 God shielde³ that it shoulde so befall.
 'Ah' good Sir Host, I have ywedded be
 These moneths two, and more not paidie, 9110
 And yet I trow that he, that all his life

¹ Thrive² Again.³ Forbid.

¹ Thrust
through

Wifeless hath been, though that men would him life¹
Into the heart, ne could in no manneire 9113

Tellen so much sorow, as I you here
Could tellen of my wife's cursedness'

'Now,' quod our Host, 'Merchant, so God you
Since ye so muchel knowen of that art, [bless,
Full heartily I pray you tell us part'

'Gladly,' quod he, 'but of mine owen sore
For sorow heart I tellen may no more' 9120

THE MERCHANT'S TALE

² Of the
laity

WHILOM there was dwelling in Lombardy
A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie,
In which he lived in great prosperity,
And sixty year a wifeless man was he,
And follow'd aye his bodily delight
On women, there as was his appetite,
As do these fooles that be seculere²

³ Inclina-
tion

And when that he was passed sixty year,
Were it for holiness or for dotage,
I cannot say, but such a great courage³
Hadde this knight to be a wedded man,
That day and night he doth all that he can
T' espie where that he might wedded be,
Praying our Lord to granten him, that he
Mighte once knowen of that blissful life,
That is betwixt an husband and his wife,
And for to live under that holy bond,
With which God firste man and woman bond
'None other life (said he) is worth a bean,
For wedlock is so easy and so clean,

9130

9140

That in this world it is a paradise'	9141	
Thus saith this olde knight, that was so wise.		
And certainly, as sooth ¹ as God is king,		¹ True.
To take a wife, it is a glorious thing,		
And namely when a man is old and hoar,		
Then is a wife the fruit of his treasór,		
Then should he take a young wife and a fan,		
On which he might engender him an heir,		
And lead his life in joy and in solas, ²		Mirth
Whereas these bachelors singen Alas!	9150	
When that they find any adversity		
In love, which n'is but childish vanity.		
And truely it sit ³ well to be so,		³ Becomes
That bachelors have often pain and woe		
On brittle ground they build, and brittleness		
They finden, when they weenen ⁴ sikerness ⁵		⁴ Think ⁵ Security
They live but as a bud or as a best, ⁶		⁶ Beast
In liberty and under no arrest,		
Thereas ⁷ a wedded man in his estate		⁷ Whereas
Liveth a life blissful and ordinate,	9160	
Under the yoke of marriage ybound.		
Well may his heart in joy and bliss abound		
For who can be so buxom ⁸ as a wife?		⁸ Obedient
Who is so true and eke so áttentive		
To keep him, sick and whole, as is his make? ⁹		⁹ Mate
For weal or woe she n'll him not forsake		
She n'is not weary him to love and serve,		
Though that he lie bedrid till that he sterve ¹⁰		¹⁰ Die
And yet some clerkes say, it is not so,		
Of which he, Theophrast, is one of tho ¹¹	9170	¹¹ Those
What force ¹² though Theophrast list for to he?		¹² What ¹³ matter
'Ne take no wife,' quod he, 'for husbandry, ¹³		Thrift.
As for to spare in household thy dispense:		
A true servant doth more diligence	-	

	Thy good to keep, than doth thine owen wife,	9175
	For she will clamen half part all hei life	
	And if that thou be sick, so God me save,	
¹ Servant	Thy very friendes or a true knave ¹	
² Better	Will keep thee bet ² than she, that waiteth aye	
	After thy good, and hath done many a day'	9180
	This sentence, and an hundred thinges woise	
	Writeth this man, there God his bones curse	
³ Notice	But take no keep ³ of all such vauity,	
	Defieth Theophiast, and heark'neth me.	
	A wife is Godde's gifte verily,	
	All other mannei giftes hardily,	
⁴ Common	As landes, rentes, pasture, or commune, ⁴	
⁵ Move ables	Or mebles, ⁵ all be giftes of fortune,	
	That passen as a shadow on the wall	
⁶ Doubt	But diede ⁶ thou not, if plainly speak I shall,	9190
	A wife will last and in thine house endure,	
	Well longer than thee list paraventure	
	Mariage is a full great sacrament,	
⁷ Ruined	He which that hath no wife I hold him shent, ⁷	
	He liveth helpless, and all desolate,	
	(I speak of folk in secular estate)	
	And heark'neth why, I say not this for nought,	
	That woman is for manne's help ywrought	
	The highe God, when he had Adam maked,	
	And saw him all alone belly naked,	9200
⁸ Then.	God of his greate goodness saide than, ⁸	
	Let us now make an help unto this man	
	Like to himself, and then he made him Eve	
⁹ Prove	Here may ye see, and hereby may ye prieve, ⁹	
	That a wife is man's help and his comfort,	
	His paradise terrestre and his disport	
¹⁰ Yield ing	So buxom ¹⁰ and so virtuous is she,	
	They musten needes live in unity.	

One flesh they be, and one flesh, as I guess,	9209	
Hath but one heart in weal and in distress		
A wife? Ah! Sante Mary, <i>benedicite</i> ,		
How might a man have any' adversity		
That hath a wife? certes I cannot sey ¹		¹ See
The bliss the which that is betwixt them tway		
There may no tongue tell or hearte think		
If he be poor, she helpeth him to swink, ²		² Labour
She keepth his good, and wasteth never a del, ³		³ Whit
All that her husband doth, her liketh well,		
She saith not ones Nay, when he saith Ye, ⁴		⁴ Yea
'Do this,' saith he, 'All ready, Sn,' saith she	9220	
O blissful order, O wedlock precious,		
Thou art so merry, and eke so virtuous,		
And so commended, and approved eke,		
That every man that holt ⁵ him worth a leek,		⁵ Holdeth
Upon his bare knees ought all his life		
Thanken his God, that him hath sent a wife,		
Or elles pray to God him for to send		
A wife, to last unto his life's end		
For then his life is set in sikerness, ⁶		⁶ Security
He may not be deceivéd, as I guess,	9230	
So that he work after his wife's rede, ⁷		⁷ Advice
Then may he boldly bearen up his head,		
They be so true, and therewithal so wise		
For which, if thou wilt worken as the wise,		
Do alway so, as women will thee rede ⁸		⁸ Advise
Lo how that Jacob, as these clerkes read,		
By good counsél of his mother Rebec'		
Bounde the kidde's skin about his neck,		
For which his father's benison ⁹ he wan.		⁹ Blessing
Lo Judith, as the story eke tell can,	9240	
By good counsél she Godde's people kept,		
And slew him, Holofernes, while he slept.		

	<p>Lo Abigail, by good counsél how she Savéd hei husband Nabal, when that he Should have been slain And look, Hestéi also By good counsel deliveried out of woe The people of God, and made him, Mairdochee Of Assuere enhancéd for to be</p>	9243
¹ Satisfac tion.	<p>There n'is no thing in gree¹ superlative (As saith Senec) above an humble wife</p>	9250
² Biddeth	<p>Suffer thy wife's tongue, as Caton bit,² She shall command, and thou shalt suffer it, And yet she will obey of courtesy</p>	
³ Work	<p>A wife is keeper of thine husbandry Well may the sicke man bewail and weep, There as there is no wife the house to keep I warne thee, if wisely thou wilt weiche,³ Love well thy wife, as Christ lovéth his cheiche If thou lovést thyself, love thou thy wife No man hatéth his flesh, but in his life</p>	9260
⁴ Thrive	<p>He fost'rieth it, and therefore bid I thee Cherish thy wife, or thou shalt never the ⁴</p>	
⁵ Mock	<p>Husband and wife, what so men jape⁵ or play,</p>	
⁶ Sure	<p>Of worldly folk holden the siker⁶ way They be so knyt, there may no harm betide, And namely upon the wife's side</p>	
	<p>For which this January, of whom I told, Considered hath within his dayes old The lusty life, the virtuous quét, That is in marriage honey-sweet.</p>	9270
⁷ Serious	<p>And for his friendes on a day he sent To tellen them th' effect of his intent With face sad,⁷ his tale he hath them told He saide, 'Friendes, I am hoar and old, And almost (God wot) on my pitte's brink, Upon my soule somewhat must I think</p>	

I have my body folhly ¹ dispended,	9277	¹ Foolishly
Blessed be God that it shall be amended -		
For I will be certáin a wedded man,		
And that anon in all the haste I can		
Unto some maiden, fan and tender of age,		
I pray you shapeth ² for my marriage		² Prepare
All suddenly, for I will not abide		
And I will fonde ³ t' espíen on my side,		³ Try
To whom I may be wedded hastily		
But forasmuch as ye be more than I,		
Ye shallen rather such a thing espíen		
Than I, and where me beste were t' allien		
'But one thing wain I you, my friendes dear,		
I will none old wife have in no mannere.	9290	
She shall not passen twenty year certáin.		
Old fish and younge flesh would I have fan		
Bet ⁴ is (quod he) a pike than a pikerel, ⁵		⁴ Better
And bet than old beef is the tender veal.		⁵ Young pike
I will no woman thirty year of age,		
It is but beanestraw and great foráge		
And eke these olde widows (God it wote)		
They connen ⁶ so much craft on Wades boat,		⁶ Know
So muchel broken harm when that them lest, ⁷		Please
That with them should I never live in rest	9300	
For sundy schooles maken subtle cleikes;		
Woman of many schooles half a clerk is.		
But certainly, a young thing men may gie, ⁸		⁸ Guide.
Right as men may warm wax with handes plie ⁹		⁹ Mould
Wherefore I say you plainly in a clause,		
I will none old wife have nìght for this cause		
'For if so were I hadde such mischance,		
That I in her ne could have no pleasance,		
Then should I lead my life in avoutrie,		
And so straight to the devil when I die	9310	

¹ Rather

Ne children should I none upon hei gotten 9311
 Yet were me levei¹ houndes had me eaten,
 Than that mine heritage shoulde fall
 In strange hands and this I tell you all.
 I doate not, I wot the cause why
 Men shoulde wed and furthermore wot I,
 There speaketh many a man of marriage,
 That wot no more of it than wot my page,
 For which causes a man should take a wife
 If he ne may not liven chaste his life, 9320
 Take him a wife with great devoti3n,
 Because of lawful procreati3n
 Of children, to th' honour of God above,
 And not only for paramour or love;
 And for they shoulde lechery eschew,
 And yield then debte when that it is due
 Or for that each of them should helpen othei
 In mischief, as a suster shall the brother,
 And live in chastity full hohly.
 'But, Snes, (by you leave,) that am not I, 9330
 For God be thanked, I dare make avaunt,
 I feel my limbes stark and suffisant
 To do all that a man belongeth to
 I wot myselfen best what I may do
 Though I be hoar, I fare as doth a tree,
 That bloometh ere the fruit ywoxen be;
 The bloomy tree n'is neither dry nor dead
 I feel me nowhere hoar but on my head
 Mine heart and all my limbes be as green,
 As laurel through the year is for to seen 9340
 And since that ye have heard all mine intent,
 I pray you to my will ye would assent'
 Diverse men diversely him told
 Of marriage many' ensamples old;

Some blamed it, some praised it certain,	9345	
But atte laste, shortly for to sayn,		
(As all day falleth altercatiōn		
Betwixen friendes in disputiōn ¹)		¹ Dispute.
There fell a strife betwixt his biethren two,		
Of which that one was cleped Placebo,	9350	
Justinus soothly called was that other		
Placebo said, 'O January brother,		
Full litle need have ye, my lord so dear,		
Counsel to ask of any that is here		
But that ye be so full of sapiēce,		
That you ne liketh for your high prudēce,		
To weiven ² from the word of Solomon		² Depart
This word said he unto us every one;		
Work alle thing by counsel, thus said he,		
And then ne shalt thou not repenten thee.	9360	
But though that Solomon spake such a word,		
Mine owen deare brother and my lord,		
So wisly ³ God my soule bring at rest,		³ Certain-ly
I hold your owen counsel is the best		
'For, brother mine, take of me this motive,		
I have now been a court-man all my life,		
And God it wot, though I unworthy be,		
I have standen in full great degree		
Abouten lordes of full high estate.		
Yet had I never with none of them debate,	9370	
I never them contraried truely.		
I wot well that my lord can ⁴ more than I;		⁴ Knows
What that he saith, I hold it firm and stable,		
I say the same, or elles thing semblable		
A full great fool is any counsellor,		
That serveth any lord of high honour,		
That dare presume, or ones thinken it,		
That his counsél should pass his lorde's wit.		

	Nay, lordes be no fooles, by my fay.	9379
	Ye have youselven shewed here to-day	
¹ Judgment	So high sentence, ¹ so hohly, and well,	
	That I consent, and confim every deal	
	Your wordes all, and your opinioún	
	By God, there n'is no man in all this town	
² Better	Ne in Itaille, could bet ² have ysaíd	
³ Holdeth	Christ holt ³ him of this counsel well apaid ⁴	
⁴ Satisfied	And truly it is an high couáge	
⁵ Advanced	Of any man that stopen ⁵ is in age,	
	To take a young wife, by my fater kn,	
	Your hearte hangeth on a jolly pin	9390
	‘Do now in this mattéi ight as you lest,	
	For finally I hold it for the best’	
	Justinus, that aye stille sat and heard,	
	Right in this wise he to Placeb’ answeí’d	
	‘Now, brother mine, be patiént I pray,	
	Since ye have said, and heark’neth what I say	
	‘Senec among his other wordes wise	
⁶ Consider	Saith, that a man ought him ight well avise, ⁶	
	To whom he giveth his land or his chattel.	
	And since I ought avisen me ight well,	9400
	To whom I give my good away from me,	
	Well more I ought avisen me, paidie,	
	To whom I give my body for alway	
	I wain you well it is no childe’s play	
	To take a wife without avisement	
	Men must inqunen (this is mine assent)	
⁷ Given to drink	Whether she be wise and sober, or dionkelew, ⁷	
	Or proud, or elles other ways a shrew,	
⁸ A scold	A chidester, ⁸ or a waster of thy good,	
⁹ Mad	Or rich or poor, or else a man is wood ⁹	9410
	All be it so, that no man finden shall	
	None in this world, that trotteth whole in all,	

<p> Nor man, nor beast, such as men can devise, But natheless it ought enough suffice With any wife, if so were that she had More goode thewes,¹ than her vices bad - And all this asketh leisuie to inquite For God it wot, I have wept many a tear Full prively, since that I had a wife Praise whoso will a wedded manne's life, Certain I find in it but cost and care, And observánces of all blisses bare And yet, God wot, my neighebours about, And namely of women many a rout, Say that I have the moste steadfast wife, And eke the meekest one that beareth life But I wot best, where wingeth me my shoe. Ye may for me right as you liketh do Aviseth you, ye be a man of age, How that ye enter into marriage, And namely with a young wife and a fair By him that made water, fire, earth, and air, The youngest man, that is in all this rout,² Is busy enough to bringen it about To have his wife alone, trusteth me Ye shall not pleasen her fully years three, This is to say, to do her full pleasánce A wife asketh full many an observánce. I pray you that ye be not evil apaid³ 'Well,' quod this January, 'and hast thou said? Straw for Senec, and straw for thy proverbs, I counte not a pannier full of herbs Of schoole termes, 'wiser men than thou, As thou hast heard, assented here right now To my purpose Placebo, what say ye?' 'I say it is a cursed⁴ man,' quod he, </p>	<p>9413</p> <p>¹ Qualities.</p> <p>9420</p> <p>9430</p> <p>² Company</p> <p>³ Displeased.</p> <p>9441</p> <p>⁴ Ill-natured.</p>
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¹ Hinder eth	‘That letteth ¹ matrimony sikeily’ ²	9447
² Surely	And with that word they risen suddenly, And been assented fully, that he should Be wedded when him list, and where he would High fantasy and curious business	
³ Crowd	From day to day ’gan in the soul empress ³ Of January about his marriage Many a fair shape, and many a fair visage There passeth through his heate night by night. As whoso took a mirror polish’d bight, And set it in a common market-place, Then should he see many a figure pace By his mirror, and in the same wise ’Gan January in with his thought devise	9460
⁴ Sedate- ness	Of maidens, which that dwelten him beside He wiste not where that he might abide. For if that one have beauty in her face, Another stood so in the people’s grace For her sadness ⁴ and her benignity, That of the people the greatest voice hath she And some were rich and hadden a bad name But natheless, betwixt earnest and game, He at the last appointed him on one, And let all other from his heate gon,	9470
	And chose her of his own authority, For love is blind all day, and may not see And when that he was in his bed ybrought, He portray’d in his heart and in his thought Her freshe beauty, and her age tender, Her middle small, her armes long and slender, Her wise governance, her gentleness, Her womanly bearing, and her sadnéss And when that he on her was condescended, Him thought his choice it might not be amended,	9480

For when that he himself concluded had,
Him thought each other manne's wit so bad,
That impossible it were to reply

Against his choice, this was his fantasy
His fiendes sent he to, at his instaunce,
And prayed them to do him that pleasánce,
That hastily they woulden to him come,
He would abridge then labour all and some
Needed no more to them to go nor ride,
He was appointed there¹ he would abide

9481

9490

¹ Where

Placebo came, and eke his fiendes soon,
And alderfirst² he bade them all a boon,
That none of them no argumentes make
Against the purpose that he hath ytake
Which purpose was pleasánt to God (said he)
And very ground of his prosperity

² First of
all

He said, 'There was a maiden in the town,
Which that of beauty hadde great renown,
All³ were it so, she were of small degree,
Sufficeth him her youth and her beauty
Which maid (he said) he would have to his wife
To lead in ease and holness his life
And thanked God, that he might have her all,
That no wight with his blisse parten shall
And prayed them to labour in this need,
And shapen that he faille not to speed.

9500

³ Al-
though.

For then (he said) his spirit was at ease,
Then is (quod he) nothing may me displease,
Save one thing picketh in my conscience,
The which I will rehearse in your pience

9510

'I have (quod he) heard said full yore⁴ ago,
There may no man have perfect blisses two,
This is to say, in earth and eke in heaven

⁴ Long.

* 'Bade them all a boon' Made a request of them all

I hope to God hereafter ye shall know, 9548
 That there n'is no so great felicity
 In maniage, ne never more shall be,
 That you shall let¹ of your salvatioun,
 So that ye use, as skill is and reasoun,
 The lustes of your wife attemptiely,²
 And that ye please her not too amorously.
 And that ye keep you eke from other sin
 My tale is done, for my wit is but thin
 Be not aglast hereof, my brother dear,
 But let us waden out of this mattérie
 The wife of Bath, if ye have understand,
 Of maniage, which ye now have in hand, 9560
 Declared hath full well in little space
 Fareth now well, God have you in his grace'

¹ Hinder² Tempe-
rately

And with this word this Justine and his brother
 Have take their leave, and each of them of other
 And when they saw that it must needes be,
 They wroughten so by sleight and wise treaty,
 That she, this maiden, which that Maus hight,³
 And hastily as ever that she might,
 Shall wedded be unto this January.

³ Called.

I trow it were too longe you to tairy, 9570
 If I told you of every script⁴ and band,
 By which that she was feoff'd in his land,
 Or for to reckon of her rich array
 But finally ycomen is the day,
 That to the churche bothe been they went,
 For to receive the holy sacrament
 Forth cometh the priest, with stole about his
 neck,

⁴ Writing.

And bade her be like Sarah and Rebec',
 In wisdom and in truth of mairiage
 And said his orisons, as is uságe, 9580

¹ Crossed

And crouched¹ then, and bade God should them
 bless.

9581

² Sure

And made all sikei² enough with holiness

Thus be they wedded with solemnity,
And at the feaste sitteth he and she
With other worthy folk upon the daies
All full of joy and bliss is the paláce,
And full of instruments, and of vitaille,
The moste daunteous of all Itaille
Before them stood such instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, nor of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden never such a melody.

9590

³ Pours
out

At every course in came loud minstrelsy,
That never Joab trumped for to hear,
Ne he, Theodomas, yet half so clear
At Thebes, when the city was in doubt
Bacchus the wine them skinketh³ all about,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
(For January was become her knight,
And woulde both assayen his courage
In liberty, and eke in marriage,)
And with her firebrand in her hand about
Danceth before the bride and all the rout
And certainly I dare right well say this,
Hymeneus, that God of wedding is,
Saw never his life so merry a wedded man.

9600

Hold thou thy peace, thou poet Maecian,
That writest us that ilke wedding mery
Of her Philologie and him Mercury,
And of the songes that the Muses sung
Too small is both thy pen and eke thy tongue 9610
For to describen of this marriage
When tender youth hath wedded stooping age,
There is such mirth that it may not be written,

9610

Assayeth it yourself, then may ye witten¹
If that I he or no in this mattéie

9614 ¹ Know

Maus, that sits with so benign a chere,²
Her to behold it seemed faerie,

² Mien

Queen Hester looked never with such an eye
On Assuere, so meek a look hath she,

I may you not devise all her beauty,

9620

But thus much of her beauty tell I may,
That she was like the brighte morrow of May
Fulfilled of all beauty and pleasance

This January is ravish'd in a trance,
At every time he looketh in her face,
But in his heart he 'gan her to menace,
That he that night in armes would her straim
Harder than ever Paris did Helene

But natheless yet had he great pity

That thilke night offenden her must he,

9630

And thought, Alas, O tender creature,

Now woulde God ye mighten well endure

All my courage, it is so sharp and keen,

I am aghast ye shall it not sustene

But God forbid, that I did all my might.

Now woulde God that it were waxen night,

And that the night would lasten evermo

I would that all this people were ago.

And finally he doth all his labóur,

As he best mighte, saving his honóur,

9640

To haste them from the meat in subtle wise.

The time came that reason was to use,

And after that men dance, and drinken fast,

And spices all about the house they cast,

And full of joy and bliss is every man,

All but a squire, that highte Damian,

Which carved before the knight full many a day

	He was so ravish'd on his lady May,	9648
¹ Mad	That for the very pain he was nigh wood, ¹	
² Fainted	Almost he swelt, ² and swooned there he stood	
	So sore hath Venus hurt him with hei biand,	
	As that she bare it dancing in hei hand	
	And to his bed he went him hastily,	
	No more of him as at this time speak I,	
³ Com plain	But there I let him weep enough and plain, ³	
	Till fleshe May will ruen on his pain	
	O peulous fie, that in the bedstiaw breedeth!	
⁴ Domestic	O famuler ⁴ foe, that his service bedeth! ⁵	
⁵ Offers	O servant traitor, false of holy hue,	
	Like to the adder in bosom sly untrue,	9660
	God shield us alle from your acquaintaunce!	
	O January, drunken in pleasance	
	Of marriage, see how thy Damian,	
	Thine owen squier and thy boren man,	
	Intendeth for to do thee villany	
⁶ At home	God grante thee thine homely ⁶ foe to espy	
	For in this world n'is worse pestilence,	
	Than homely foe, all day in thy presence.	
⁷ Daily	Performed hath the sun his aie duyn, ⁷	
	No longer may the body of him sojourn	9670
	On the horizon, as in that latitude	
	Night with his mantle, that is dark and rude,	
	'Gan overspread the hemisphere about	
⁸ Pleasant company	For which departed is this lusty rout ⁸	
	From January, with thank on every side	
	Home to their houses lustily they ride,	
	Thereas they do then thinges, as them lest,	
	And when they saw then tyme, go to rest	
	Soon after that this hasty January	
⁹ Spiced wine	Will go to bed, he will no longer taily.	9680
	He drinketh hippocras, clauie, ⁹ and vernage	

Of spices hot, t' increasen his courage	9682	
And many a lectuary had he full fine,		
Such as the cursed monk Dan Constantine		
Hath written in his book <i>de Coure</i> ;		
To eat them all he woulde nothing eschew		
And to his pryvy friendes thus said he		
'For Godde's love, as soon as it may be,		
Let voiden all this house in couteous wise'		
And they have done right as he will devise	9690	*
Men drunken, and the traveis ¹ draw anon;		¹ Servants.
The bride is brought a-bed as still as stone,		
And when the bed was with the priest ybless'd,		
Out of the chamber hath every wight him dress'd,		
And January hath fast in armes take		
His freshe May, his paradise, his make ²		² Mate
He lulleth her, he kisseth her full oft,		
With thicke bustles of his beard unsoft,		
Like to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere,		
(For he was shave all new in his mannere,)	9700	
He rubbeth her upon her tender face,		
And saide thus, 'Alas! I must trespase		
To you, my spouse, and you greatly offend,		
Or time come that I will down descend		
But natheless considereth this, (quod he,)		
There n'is no workman, whatsoever he be,		
That may both worken well and hastily		
This will be done at leisure perfectly		
It is no force ³ how longe that we play		³ No matter.
In true wedlock coupled be we tway,	9710	
And blessed be the yoke that we be in,		
For in our actes may there be no sin		
A man may do no sinne with his wife,		
Ne hurt himselfen with his owen knife		
For we have leave to play us by the law'		

¹ Wanton
ness

Thus labourerth he, till that the day 'gan daw,
 And then he tak'th a sop in fine claie, 9717
 And upright in his bed then sitteth he
 And after that he sang full loud and clear,
 And kiss'd his wife, and maketh wanton cheer
 He was all coltish, full of ragerie,¹
 And full of jargon, as a flecked pie
 The slacke skin about his necke shaketh,
 While that he sang, so chanteth he and craketh
 But God wot what that May thought in hei heart,
 When she him saw up sitting in his shut
 In his night-cap, and with his necke lean
 She praiseth not his playing worth a bean
 Then said he thus, 'My reste will I take
 Now day is come, I may no longer wake,' 9730
 And down he laid his head and slept till prime
 And afterward, when that he saw his time,
 Up riseth January, but freshe May
 Held hei in chamber till the fourthe day,
 As usage is of wives for the best
 For every labour sometime must have rest,
 Or elles longe may he not endure,
 This is to say, no lives créature,
 Be it of fish, or bird, or beast, or man
 Now will I speak of woful Damian, 9740
 That languisheth for love, as ye shall hear,
 Therefore I speak to him in this mannere
 I say, O silly Damian, alas!
 Answeér to this demand, as in this case,
 How shalt thou to thy lady freshe May
 Tellen thy woe? She will alway say nay,
 Eke if thou speak, she will thy woe bewrein,²
³ God be thine help, I can no better sem³
 This sicke Damian in Venus' fire

² Discover

³ Sec

So burneth, that he dieth for desne,
For which he put his life in aventure,
No longer might he in this wise endure,
But privily a pennel¹ 'gan he borrow,
And in a letter wrote he all his sorow,
In manner of a complaint or a lay,
Unto his fane fieshé lady May

9750

¹ Pen case

And in a purse of silk, hung on his shirt,
He hath it put, and laid it at his heart

The moone that at noon was thilke² day

² That.

That January hath wedded fieshe May
In ten of Taure, was into Cancer gliden,
So long hath Marus in her chamber abiden,
As custom is unto these nobles all.

9760

A brude shall not eaten in the hall,
Till dayes four or three days at the least
Ypassed been, then let her go to feast
The fourthe day complete from noon to noon.

When that the highe masse was ydone,

In halle sat this January and May,

As fresh as is the brighte summer's day.

9770

And so befell, how that this goode man

Remember'd him upon this Damian,

And saide, 'Saint Maiý, how may it be,

That Damian attendeth not to me?

Is he aye sick? or how may this betide?"

HIS squires, which that stooden there beside,

Excused him, because of his sickness,

Which letted³ him to do his business.

³ Hindered.
ed.

None othei cause mighte make him tarry.

'That me forthinketh,'⁴ quod this January;

9780

⁴ Grieses

‘He is a gentle squer, by my truth,

If that he died, it were great harm and ruth

He is as wise, discreet, and as secree,

This purse hath she in with her bosom hid, 9818
 And went her way, ye get no more of me,
 But unto January ycome is she,
 That on his bedde's side sat full soft
 He taketh her, and kisseth her full oft
 And laid him down to sleep, and that anon
 She feigned her, as that she muste gon
 Thereas ye wot that every wight must need,
 And when she of this bill hath taken heed,
 She rent it all to cloutes at the last,
 And in the pryvy softly it cast

Who studieth now but faue freshe May?
 Adown by olde January she lay, 9839
 That slepte, till the cough hath him awaked.
 Anon he prayd her struppen her all naked,
 He would of her, he said, have some pleasance,
 And said, her clothes did him incumbiance
 And she obeyth him, be her lefe¹ or loth
 But lest that precious² folk be with me wroth,
 How that he wrought, I dare not to you tell,
 Or whether her thought it paradise or hell,
 But there I let them worken in then wise
 Till evesong rang, and that they must arise 9840

Were it by destiny, or aventure,
 Were it by influence, or by nature,
 Or constellation, that in such estate
 The heaven stood at that time fortunate,
 As for to put a bill of Venus' werkes
 (For alle thing hath time, as say these clerkes,)
 To any woman for to get her love,
 I cannot say, but grete God above,
 That knoweth that none act is causeless,
 He deem of all, for I will hold my peace 9850
 But sooth is this, how that this freshe May

¹ Willing² Precise

	Hath taken such impressi3n that day	9852
	Of pity on this sicke Damian,	
	That from her hearte she ne driven can	
	The remembra3ce for to do him ease	
	'Certain (thought she) whom that this thing displease	
	I recke not, for here I him assure,	
	To love him best of any creatúre,	
	Though he no more hadde than his shert'	
	Lo, pity runneth soon in gentle heart	9860
¹ Genero sity	Here may ye see, how excellent franchise ¹	
	In women is when they them narrow avise "	
	Some tyrant is, as there be many one,	
	That hath an heart as hard as any stone,	
² Die	Which would have let him steiven ² in the place	
	Well rather than have gianted him her gracie	
	And them rejoicen in their cruel pride,	
	And reckon not to be an homicide	
	This gentle May, fulfilled of pity,	
	Right of her hand a letter makoth she,	9870
	In which she granteth him her very gracie,	
	There lacked nought, but only day and place,	
	Where that she might unto his lust suffice	
	For it shall be, ight as he will devise	
	And when she saw her tyme upon a day	
	To visiten this Damian go'th this May,	
	And subtilly this letter down she thiest	
	Under his pillow, read it if him lest	
	She tak'th him by the hand, and hard him twist	
	So secretly, that no wight of it wist,	9880
	And bade him be all whole, and forth she went	
	To January, when he for her sent	
	Up useth Damian the nexte morrow,	
	All passed was his sickness and his sorrow	
	* 'When they them narrow avise' When they closely consider	

He combeth him, he prometh¹ him and picketh,
 He doth all that his lady list and liketh,
 And eke to January he go'th as low,
 As ever did a dogge for the bow.

9886

¹ Trim-
meth

He is so pleasant unto every man,
 (For craft is all, whoso that do it can,)
 That every wight is fain to speak him good,
 And fully in his lady's grace he stood

Thus let I Damian about his need,
 And in my tale forth I will proceed

Some clerkes holden that felicity
 Stands in delight, and therefore certain he,
 This noble January, with all his might
 In honest wise as 'longeth to a knight,
 Shope² him to hven full deliciously
 His housing, his array, as honestly³
 To his degree was maked as a king's.

9900

² Shaped
³ Honour-
ably

Amonges other of his honest things
 He had a garden walled all with stone,
 So fain a garden wot I nowhere none
 For out of doubt I verily suppose,
 That he that wote the Romance of the Rose,
 Ne could of it the beauty well devise.

Ne Priapus ne mighte not suffice,
 Though he be god of gardens, for to tell
 The beauty of the garden, and the well,
 That stood under a lauel alway green
 Full often time he, Pluto, and his queen,
 Proserpina, and alle their faerie,

9910

Disporten them and maken melody
 About that well, and danced, as men told.

This noble knight, this January the old,
 Such dainty hath in it to walk and pley,
 That he will suffer no wight bear the key,

¹ Key	<p>Save he himself, for of the small wicket 9918 He bare alway of silver a cliket,¹ With which when that him list he it unshet And when that he would pay his wife's debt In summer season thither would he go, And May his wife, and no wight but they two, And thinges which that were not done a-bed, He in the garden performed them and sped And in this wise many a merry day Lived this January and freshe May, But worldly joy may not alway endure To January, nor to no creature 9930</p>
² Strange.	<p>O sudden hap, O thou fortune unstable, Like to the scorpion so deceivable, That flatt'est with thy head when thou wilt sting, Thy tail is death, through thine envenoming O brittle joy, O sweete poison quant,² O monster, that so subtilly canst paint Thy giftes, under hue of steadfastness, That thou deceivest bothe more and less, Why hast thou January thus deceived, That haddest him for thy full friend received? 9940 And now thou hast bereft him both his eyen, For sorrow of which desireth he to dien</p>
³ Pleasure	<p>Alas! this noble January free, Amid his lust³ and his prosperity Is waxen blind, and that all suddenly He weepeth and he waleth piteously, And therewithal, the fire of jealousý (Lest that his wife should fall in some folly) So bunt his hearte, that he woulde fain, That some man had both him and her yslain, 9950 For neither after his death, nor in his life, Ne would he that she were no love nor wife,</p>

But ever live as a widow in clothes blake,	9953	
Sole as the turtle that hath lost her make ¹		¹ Mate
But at the last, after a month or tway,		
His sorrow 'gan assuagen, sooth to say		
For when he wist it might none other be,		
He patiently took his adversitey		
Save out of doubt he ne may not forgon,		
That he n'as jealous ever more in one.	9960	
Which jealousy it was so outrageous,		
That neither in hall, ne in none other house,		
Ne in none other place never the mo		
He n'olde suffer hei for to ride or go,		
But if that he had hand on her alway		
For which full often weepeth freshe May,		
That loveth Damian so burningly,		
That she must either dien suddenly,		
Or elles she must have him as hei lest ²		² Please
She waited ³ when her hearte would to-brest ⁴	9970	³ Expect- ed
Upon that other side Damian		⁴ Burst.
Becomen is the sorrowfullest man		
That ever was, for neither night nor day		
Ne might he speak a word to freshe May,		
As to his purpose of no such mattére,		
But if that January must it hear,		
That had an hand upon her evermo		
But natheless, by witing to and fro,		
And privy signes, wist he what she meant,		
And she knew eke the fine ⁵ of his intent	9980	⁵ End.
O January, what might it thee avail,		
Though thou might see as far as shippes sail ²		
For as good is blind to deceived be,		
As be deceived, when a man may see		
Lo, Argus, which that had an hundred eyen,		
For all that ever he could pore or pryen,		

¹ Deceived	Yet was he blent, ¹ and, God wot, so be mo,	9987
² Surely	That weenen wisly ² that it be not so Pass over is an ease, I say no more	
³ Key,	This fleshe May, of which I spake of yore, In waim wax hath impainted the chiket, ³ That January bare of the small wicket, By which into his garden oft he went, And Damian, that knew all hei intent, The chiket counterfeted privily, There n'is no more to say, but hastily Some wonder by this chiket shall betide, Which ye shall hearen, if ye will abide O noble Ovid, sooth sayest thou, God wot, What sleight is it, if love be long and hot,	10000
⁴ Learn	That he n'll find it out in some manneire ² By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lere, ⁴ Though they were kept full long and strait over all,	
⁵ Whisper ing	They been accorded, rowning ⁵ through a wall, There no wight could have founden such a sleight But now to purpose, ere that dayes eight	
⁶ Befell	Were passed of the month of Jul, befill, ⁶ That January hath caught so great a will, Through egging of his wife, him for to play In his gardén, and no wight but they tway,	10010
⁷ Wet	That in a morrow unto this May said he, 'Rise up, my wife, my love, my lady free, The turtle's voice is heard, mine owen sweet, The winter is gone, with all his iames weet ⁷	
⁸ Of a dove	Come forth now with thine eyen columbine ⁸ Well fanei be thy breasts than any wine The garden is enclosed all about, Come forth, my white spouse, for out of doubt, Thou hast me wounded in mine heart, O wife	
⁹ Was not	No spot in thee n'as ⁹ never in all thy life	10020

Come forth, and let us taken ouȝ disport, 10021
I choose thee for my wife and my comfort.'

Such olde lewed wordes used he
On Damian a signe made she,
That he should go before with his chiket.
This Damian hath opened the wicket,
And in he stait, and that in such mannere,
That no wight might him see neither yheai,
And still he sat under a bush Anon

This January, as blind as is a stone, 10030
With Maus in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into this freshe garden is ago,
And clapped to the wicket suddenly

'Now, wife,' quod he, 'here n'is but thou, and I,
That art the creature that I best love.

For by that Lord that sits in heaven above,
I hadde lever¹ dien on a knife,
Than thee offenden, deare true wife.

¹ Rather

For Godde's sake, think how I thee chees,²

² Chose

Not for no covetise doubtless, 10040
But only for the love I had to thee.

And though that I be old and may not see,
Be to me true, and I will tell you why,
Certes thre thinges shall ye win thereby,
First, love of Christ, and to yourself honour,
And all mine heritage, town and tow'r

I give it you, make charters as you lest
This shall be done to-morrow ere sun rest,
So wisly³ God my soule bring to bliss,

³ Surely

I pray you on this cov'nant ye me kiss. 10050

And though that I be jealous, wite⁴ me nought,

⁴ Blame

Ye be so deep imprinted in my thought,
That when that I consider your beauty,
And therewithal the unlikely eld of me,

	I may not certes, though I shoulde die,	10055
	Forbear to be out of your company	
	For very love, this is withouten doubt	
	Now kiss me, wife, and let us roam about'	
	This freshe May, when she these wordes heard,	
	Bemignely to January answer'd,	10060
	But first and forward she began to weep.	
	'I have,' quod she, 'a soule for to keep	
	As well as ye, and also mine honour,	
	And of my wifehood thilke tender flow'r,	
	Which that I have assured in your hond,	
	When that the priest to you my body bond	
	Wherefore I will answer in this mannere,	
	With leave of you, mine owen lord so dear	
	'I pray to God that never dawn that day,	
¹ Die	That I ne sterve, ¹ as foul as woman may,	10070
	If ever I do unto my kin that shame,	
	Or elles I impaire so my name,	
	That I be false, and if I do that lack,	
	Do strippen me and put me in a sack,	
² Cause	And in the nexte river do ² me drench ³	
³ Drown	I am a gentlewoman, and no wench	
	Why speak ye thus ² but men be ever untrue,	
	And women have reproof of you aye new	
⁴ Know	Ye con ⁴ none other dalliance, I 'heve,	
⁵ Reproof	But speak to us as of untrist and reprove ⁵	10080
	And with that word she saw where Damian	
	Sat in the bush, and coughen she began,	
	And with her finger a sign made she,	
	That Damian should climb up on a tree,	
	That charged was with fruit, and up he went:	
	For verily he knew all her intent,	
⁶ Better	And every signe that she coude make,	
⁷ Mate	Well bet ⁶ than January her owen make ⁷	

For in a letter she had told him all	10089	
Of this mattéi, how that he woiken shall		
And thus I let ¹ him sitting in the peiy, ²		¹ Leave
And January and May roaming full merry		² Pear-tree
Bright was the day, and blue the firmament,		
Phœbus of gold his streames down hath sent		
To gladden every flow'r with his warmness,		
He was that time in <i>Geminis</i> , I guess,		
But little from his declinatiôn		
Of Cancer, Jove's exaltatiôn		
And so befell in that bright morrow-tide,		
That in the garden, on the farther side,	10100	
Pluto, that is the king of Faerie,		
And many a lady in his company		
Following his wife, the queen Proserpina,		
Which that he ravished out of Ethna,		
While that she gather'd flowers in the mead,		
(In Claudian ye may the story read,		
How that her in his grisly cart ³ he fet, ⁴)		³ Chariot
This king of Faerie adown him set		⁴ Fetched
Upon a bench of tuifes fiesh and green,		
And right anon thus said he to his queen	10110	
'My wife,' quod he, 'there may no wight say nay,		
Th' experience so prov'th it every day,		
The treason which that woman doth to man		
Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can		
Notable of your untruth and buttlencss.		
'O Solomon, richest of all richness,		
Fulfil'd of sapience, and worldly glory,		
Full worthy be thy wordes to memóiy		
To every wight, that wit and reason can. ⁵		⁵ Knows.
Thus praiseth he the bounty ⁶ yet of man,	10120	⁶ Good-
Among a thousand men yet found I one,		ness
But of all women found I never none		.

Thus saith this king, that knew your wickedness,
 And Jesus, *Filius Snach*, as I guess, 10124
 He speaketh of you but seldom reverence.
 A wilde fire, a corrupt pestilence,
 So fall upon your bodies yet to-night
 Ne see ye not this honourable knight?
 Because, alas! that he is blind and old,
 His owen man shall make him cokewold 10130
 Lo, where he sits, the lecher, in the tree
 Now will I gianten of my majesty
 Unto this olde blinde worthy knight,
 That he shall have again his eyen sight,
 When that his wife will do him villany,
 Then shall he knowen all her harlotry,
 Both in reproof of her and other mo'
 'Yea, Sn,' quod Proseipine, 'and will ye so?
 Now by my mother Ceres' soul I swear,
 That I shall give her suffisant answeré, 10140
 And alle women after for her sake,
 That though they be in any guilt ytake,
 With face bold they shall themselves excuse,
 And bear them down that wolden them accuse
 For lack of answer, none of us shall dien,
 All¹ had ye seen a thing with both your eyen,
 Yet shall we so visage² it hardily,
 And weep and swear and chiden subtilly,
 That ye shall be as lewed³ as be geese
 'What recketh me of your authorities? 10150
 I wot well that this Jew, this Solomon,
 Found of us women fooles many one
 But though that he ne found no good woman,
 There hath yfoundeden many another man
 Women full good, and true, and virtuous,
 Witnes on them that dwelt in Christe's house,

¹ Al-
 though
² Face it

³ Stupid.

With martyrdom they proved their constānce	10157	
The Roman gestes ¹ maken remembrance		¹ Historics
Of many a very true wife also		
But, Sir, ne be not wioth, all be it so,		
Though that he said he found no good woman,		
I pray you take the sentence ² of the man		² Opinion
He meant thus, That in sovereign bounty		
N'is none but God, no, neither he nor she ³		³ Male nor female
'Hey, for the very God that n'is but one,		
What maken ye so much of Solomon?		
What though he made a temple, Godde's house?		
What though he iche were and glorious?		
So made he eke a temple of false goddes,		
How might he do a thing that more forbode ⁴ is?		⁴ Forbidden
Pardie, as fan as ye his name emplastie, ⁵	10171	⁵ Plaster over
He was a lecher, and an idolastre, ⁶		⁶ Idolater
And in his eld he very God forsook		
And if that God ne had (as saith the book)		
Spared him for his father's sake, he should		
Have lost his regne ⁷ rather than he would		⁷ Kingdom
'I sette ⁸ not of all the villany,		⁸ Value
That he of women wrote, a butterfly		
I am a woman, needes must I speak,		
Or swell unto that time mine hearte break	10180	
For since he said that we be jangleiresses, ⁹		⁹ Praterers
As ever may I brooken ¹⁰ whole my tresses,		¹⁰ Enjoy
I shall not spairen for no courtesy		
To speak him harm, that saith us villany'		
'Dame,' quod this Pluto, 'be no longer wioth,		
I give it up but since I swore mine oath,		
That I would granten him his sight again,		
My word shall stand, that warn I you certān		
I am a king, it sit ¹¹ me not to he'		¹¹ Becomes
'And I,' quod she, 'am queen of Faerie.	10190	

	<p>Hei answer she shall have, I undertake. 10191 Let us no more wordes of it make' 'Forsooth,' quod he, 'I will you not contraiy' Now let us turn again to January, That in the garden with his faue May Singeth well merrier than the popinjay ¹ 'You love I best, and shall, and othei none.'</p>	
¹ Parrot	<p>So long about the alleys is he gone, Till he was come again to thilke pey,² Where as this Damian sitteth full merry 10200 On high, among the freshe leaves green This freshe May, that is so bright and sheen, 'Gan for to sigh, and said, 'Alas my side' Now, Sn,' quod she, 'for ought that may betide I must have of the peaes that I see, Or I must die, so sore longeth me To eaten of the smalle peaes green. Help, for hei love that is of heaven queen! I tell you well a woman in my plight May have to fruit so great an appetite, 10210 That she may dien, but she of it have'</p>	
³ Had not ⁴ Servant	<p>'Alas!' quod he, 'that I n'ad³ here a knave,⁴ That coulde clmb, alas! alas!' quod he, 'For I am blind' 'Yea, Sn, no force,'⁵ quod she, 'But would ye vouchesafe for Godde's sake, The pey in with your aimes for to take, (For well I wot that ye mistrusten me,) Then would I clmben well enough,' quod she, 'So I my foot might setten on your back'</p>	
⁵ No matter	<p>'Certes,' said he, 'therem shall be no lack, 10220 Might I you helpen with mine hearte blood' He stoopeth down, and on his back she stood, And caught her by a twist,⁶ and up she go'th (Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wioth,</p>	
⁶ Twig		

I cannot glose, I am a rude man) 10225

And suddenly anon this Damian

'Gan pullen up the smock, and in he throng.

And when that Pluto saw this greate wrong,

To January he gave again his sight,

And made him see as well as ever he might 10230

And when he thus had caught his sight again,

Ne was there never man of thing so fain

But on his wife his thought was evermo

Up to the tree he cast his eyen two,

And saw how Damian his wife had dress'd

In such mannere, it may not be express'd,

But if I woulde speak uncourteously

And up he gave a roaring and a cry,

As doth the mother when the child shall die,

'Out! help! alas! harow!' he 'gan to cry, 10240

'O stronge lady store, what doest thou?'

And she answer'd. 'Sue, what aileth you?'

Have patience and reason in your mind,

I have you helped on both your eyen blind

Up peil of my soul, I shall not lien,

As me was taught to helped with your eyen,

Was nothing better for to make you see,

Than struggle with a man upon a tree.

God wot, I did it in full good intent'

'Struggle!' quod he, 'yea, algate in it went 10250

God give you both one shames death to dien!

He swived thee, I saw it with mine eyen,

And elles be I hanged by the halse'¹

¹ Neck

'Then is,' quod she, 'my medicine all false;

For certainly, if that ye mighten see,

Ye would not say these wordes unto me

Ye have some glimpsing, and no perfect sight.'

'I see,' quod he, 'as well as ever I might,

	(Thanked be God,) with both mine eyen two, 10259 And by my faith methought he did thee so ' 'Ye maze, ye mazen, goode Sn,' quod she , 'This thank have I for I have made you see Alas'' quod she, 'that ever I was so kind ' 'Now, dame,' quod he, 'let all pass out of mind
¹ Dear	Come down, my lefe, ¹ and if I have missaid,
² Grieved	God help me so, as I am evil apaid ² But by my father's soul, I ween'd have sem, How that this Damian had by thee lein, And that thy smock had lain upon his breast ' 'Yea, Sn,' quod she, 'ye may ween as you lest But, Sn, a man that waketh of his sleep, 10271 He may not suddenly well taken keep Upon a thing, nor see it perfectly, ³ Awaken- ed Till that he be adawod ³ verily Right so a man, that long hath blind ybe, He may not suddenly so well ysee, First when his sight is new comen again, As he that hath a day or two yseen Till that your sight ysettled be a while, There may full many a sighte you beguile 10280 Beware, I pray you, for by heaven king Full many a man weeneth to see a thing, And it is all another than it seemeth He which that misconceiveth oft misdeemeth ' And with that word she leapt down from the tree This January, who is glad but he ? He kisseth her, and chippeth ⁴ her full oft, And on her womb he stroketh her full soft, ⁵ Led And to his palace home he hath her lad ⁵ Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad 10290 Thus endeth here my tale of January, God bless us, and his mother, Saint Mary

THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE.

'By Godde's mercy,' said our Hoste tho, ¹	10293	¹ Then
'Now such a wife I pray God keep me fro		
Lo, suche sleighes and subtilties		
In women be, for aye as busy as bees		
Be they us silly men for to deceive,		
And from a soothe ² will they ever weive ³		² Truth.
By this Merchante's tale it proveth well		³ Swerve
But natheless, as true as any steel,	10300	
I have a wife, though that she poore be,		
But of hei tongue a blabbing shrew is she,		
And yet she hath an heap of vices mo		
Thereof no force, ⁴ let all such thinges go		⁴ No mat-
But weet ⁵ ye what ⁷ in counsel be it said,		ter
Me rueth sore I am unto hei tied,		⁵ Know
For, and ⁶ I shoulde reckon every vice,		⁶ If
Which that she hath, ywis ⁷ I were too nice,		⁷ Certainly
And cause why, it should reported be		
And told to hei of ⁸ some of this company,	10310	⁸ By
(Of whom it needeth not for to declare,		
Since women connen ⁹ utter ¹⁰ such chaffaie,) ¹¹		⁹ Know
And eke my wit sufficeth not thereto		¹⁰ Utterly,
To tellen all, wherefore my tale is do		perfect-
'Squér, come near, if it your wille be,		¹¹ Ware

Of which the eldest son hight Algarsife,
That other was ycleped Camballo

10344

A daughter had this worthy king also,
That youngest was, and highte Canace
But for to tellen you all her beauty,
It li'th not in my tongue, nor in my conning,¹

¹ Skill

I dare not undertake so high a thing

10350

Mine English eke is insufficient,

It muste be a rethor² excellent,

² Rhetori-

That could³ his colours 'longing for that art,

³ Knew

If he should her describen any part

I am not such, I must speak as I can

And so befell, that when this Cambuscan

Hath twenty winter borne his diadem,

As he was wont from year to year I deem,

He let the feast of his nativity

Done⁴ cryen, throughout Sarrá his city,

10360 ⁴ Caused.

The last Idus of March, after the year

Phœbus the sun full jollif was and clear,

For he was nigh his exaltation

In Marte's face, and in his mansion

In Aries, the cholerick hot sign

Full lusty⁵ was the weather and benign,

⁵ Pleasant

For which the fowls against the sunne sheen,⁶

⁶ Bright

What for the season and the younge green,

Full loude sungen their affections

Them seem'd have gotten them protections

10370

Against the sword of winter keen and cold

This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,

In royal vestiments, sat on his dais

With diadem, full high in his palace;

And held his feast so solemn and so rich,

That in this world ne was there none it like⁷

⁷ Like

Of which if I shall tellen all th' array,

And after this, before the highe board	10412	
He with a manly voice said his messáge,		
After the form used in his language,		
Withouten vice of syllable or of letter.		
And for his tale shoulde seem the better,		
Accordant to his wordes was his chere, ¹		¹ Demean our
As teacheth art of speech them that it leire ²		² Learn.
Albeit that I cannot sound his style,		
Ne cannot climben over so high a stile,	10420	
Yet say I this, as to common intent,		
Thus much amounteth all that over he meant,		
If it so be that I have it in mind		
He said, 'The king of Araby' and of Ind,		
My hege lord, on this solemne day		
Saluteth you as he best can and may,		
And sendeth you in honour of your feast		
By me, that am all ready at your hest, ³		³ Com- mand
This steed of brass, that easily and well		
Can in the space of a day naturel,	10430	
(This is to say, in four-and-twenty hours,)		
Whereso you list, in drought or elles show'is,		
Bearen your body into every place,		
To which your hearte willeth for to pace, ⁴		⁴ Go
Withouten wemme ⁵ of you, through foul or fan		⁵ Fault
O if you list to fly as high in th' air,		
As doth an eagle, when him list to soar,		
This same steed shall bear you evermore		
Withouten harm, till ye be there ⁶ you lest, ⁷		⁶ Where ⁷ Please
(Though that ye sleepen on his back or rest,)	10440	
And turn again, with withing of a pin.		
He that it wrought, he coude ⁸ many a gin, ⁹		⁸ Knew ⁹ Continu- ance
He waited many a constellati3n,		
Ere he had done this operati3n,		
And knew full many a seal and many a bond.		

King- dom.	<p>‘This mirror eke, that I have in mine hond, 10446 Hath such a might, that men may in it see, When there shall fall any adversity Unto your regne,¹ or to yourself also, And openly, who is your friend or foe And over all this, if any lady bright Hath set her heart on any manner wight, If he be false, she shall his treason see, His newe love, and all his subtlety So openly, that there shall nothing hide</p>
Speech	<p>‘Wherefore against this lusty summer-tide This mirror and this ring, that ye may see, He hath sent to my lady Canace, Your excellent daughter that is here ‘The virtue of this ring, if ye will hear, 10460 Is this, that if her list it for to wear Upon her thumb, or in her purse it bear, There is no fowl that fleeth under heaven, That she ne shall well understand his steven,² And know his meaning openly and plain, And answer him in his language again And every glass that groweth upon root She shall eke know, and whom it will do boot,³ All be his woundes ne’er so deep and wide</p>
Remedy	<p>‘This naked sword, that hangeth by my side, 10470 Such virtue hath, that what man that it smite, Throughout his armour it will carve and bite, Were it as thick as is a branched oak And what man that is wounded with the stroke Shall ne’er be whole, till that you list of grace To stroken him with the plat⁴ in thilk⁵ place There⁶ he is hurt, this is as much to sayn, Ye musten with the platte sword again Stroken him in the wound, and it will close</p>

⁴ Flat
⁵ The
same
⁶ Where

This is the very sooth withouten glose, ¹	10480	¹ Deceit
It faileth not, while it is in your hold'		
And when this knight hath thus his tale told,		
He rideth out of hall, and down he light		
His steede, which that shone as sunne bight,		
Stands in the court as still as any stone		
This knight is to his chamber led anon,		
And is unarm'd, and to the meat yset		
These presents been full richely yfet, ²		² Fetched.
This is to say, the sword and the minour,		
And boine anon into the highe tow'r,	10490	
With certain officers ordain'd therefore;		
And unto Canace the ring is boie		
Solemnely, there ³ she sat at the table,		³ Where
But sikeily, ⁴ withouten any fable,		⁴ Certain
The hoise of brass, that may not be remued, ⁵		ly
It stands, as it were to the ground yglued,		⁵ Removed
There may no man out of the place it drive		
For no engine, of windlass, or polive ⁶		⁶ Pulley
And cause why, for they con ⁷ not the craft,		⁷ Know
And therefore in the place they have it laft,	10500	
Till that the knight hath taught them the mannere		
To voiden ⁸ him, as ye shall after hear		⁸ Remove
Great was the press, that swarmed to and fro		
To gauren ⁹ on this hoise that standeth so		⁹ Gaze
For it so high was, and so broad and long,		
So well proportioned for to be strong,		
Right as it were a steed of Lombardy;		
Therewith so horsely, and so quick of eye,		
As it a gentle Poileis courser were.		
For certes, from his tail unto his ear	10510	
Nature nor art ne could him not amend		
In no degree, as all the people wend ¹⁰		¹⁰ Thought
But evermore their moste wonder was,		

	How that it coude go, and was of brass,	10514
	It was of Faerie, as the people seem'd.	
	Diverse folk diversely have deem'd;	
	As many heads, as many wittes been	
¹ Bees	They murmured, as doth a swarm of been, ¹	
² Reasons	And maden skills ² after theu fantasies,	
	Rehearsing of the olde poetries,	10520
	And said it was ylike the Pegasee,	
	The horse that hadde winges for to flee,	
	O, else it was the Greeke's horse Simon,	
	That broughte Troye to destruction,	
³ Adventures	As men may in these olde gestes ³ read	
⁴ Dread	‘Mine heart (quoth one) is evermore in drede, ⁴	
	I trow some men of aimes be therein,	
	That shapen them this city for to win	
	It were right good that all such thing were know’	
⁵ Whispered	Another rowned ⁵ to his fellow low,	10530
	And said, ‘He lieth, for it is rather like	
	An appaience ymade by some magic,	
	As jugglers playen at these feastes great’	
	Of sundy doubtles thus they jangle and treat	
⁶ Ignorant	As lewed ⁶ people deemen commonly	
	Of thinges, that be made more subtly,	
	Than they can in their lew’dness comprehend,	
	They deemen gladly to the badder end	
	And some of them wond’ied on the miriour,	
⁷ Chief tower	That boine was up in to the master tow’r, ⁷	10540
	How men might in it suche thinges see	
	Another answer’d, and said, ‘It might well be	
	Naturally by compositions	
	Of angles, and of sly reflectiouns,’	
	And saide that in Rome was suche one	
	They speak of Alhazen and Vitellon,	
	And Aristotle, that writen in theu lives	

Of quaint ¹ m ¹ nois, and of p ¹ rospectives,	10548	¹ Curious
As knowen they, that have their book ^e s heard.		
And other folk have wonder'd on the sweid,		
That woulde piercen throughout every thing.		
And fell in speech of Telephus the king,		
And of Achilles for his quaint ^e spear,		
For he could with it bothe heal and deie, ²		² Wound.
Right in such wise as men may with the sweid,		
Of which ight now ye have yourselfen heard.		
They speaken of sundry harding of metál,		
And speaken of medicines therewithal,		
And how, and when it should yharded be,		
Which is unknown algates ³ unto me	10560	³ However
Then speaken they of Canacee's ring,		
And saiden all, that such a wonder thing		
Of craft of ringes heard they never none,		
Save that he, Moses and King Solomon,		
Hadden a name of conning ⁴ in such art		⁴ Knowing
Thus say the people, and drawen them apart.		
But natheless some saiden that it was		
Wonder to maken of feyn ashes glass,		
And yet is glass nought like ashes of fern,		
But for they have yknowen it so feine, ⁵	10570	⁵ Before
Therefore ceaseth then jangling and their wonder		
As sore wonder some on cause of thunder,		
On ebb and flood, on gossamer, and on mist,		
And on all thing, till that the cause is wist ⁶		⁶ Known
Thus jangle they, and deemen and devise,		
Till that the king 'gan from his board arise		
Phœbus hath left the angle meridional,		
And yet ascending was the beast réal, ⁷		⁷ Royal
The gentle Lion, with his Aldrian,		
When that this Tartar king, this Cambuscan,	10580	
Rose from his board, thereas he sat full high.		

¹ Ornaments	<p>Before him go'th the loude minstrelsy, Till he come to his chamber of parements,¹ Thereas they sounden diuers instruments, That it is like an heaven for to hea Now dancen lusty Venus' children dear : For in the Fish then lady sat full high, And looketh on them with a friendly eye</p>	10582
² Fetched ³ Soon	<p>This noble king is set upon his thione, This strange knight is fet² to him full sone,³ And on the dance he go'th with Canace Here is the revel and the jollity, That is not able a dull man to devise He must have knowen love and his service, And been a feastly man, as fiesh as May, That shoulde you devisen such array</p>	10590
⁴ Strange	<p>Who coulede tellen you the form of dances So uncouth,⁴ and so freshe countenances, Such subtle lookings and dissimulings, For dread of jealous men's apperceivings² No man but Launcelot, and he is dead</p>	10600
⁵ Pleasure	<p>Therefore I pass o'er all this lustyhed,⁵ I say no more, but in this jolliness I let them, till men to the suppet them dress</p>	
⁶ Bids ⁷ Haste	<p>The steward bit⁶ the spices for to hie⁷ And eke the wine, in all this melody, The ushers and the squerey been gone, The spices and the wine is come anon They eat and drink, and when this had an end, Unto the temple, as reason was, they wend The service done, they suppen all by day</p>	10610
⁸ Greatest	<p>What needeth you rehearsen their array?² Each man wot well, that at a king's feast Is plenty, to the most⁸ and to the least, And dainties more than be in my knowing</p>	

	And hath conceived in his wit aught	10650
	The manner and the form of all this thing,	
	Full glad and blithe, this noble doughty king	
	Repaneth to his revel, as befoine	
	The bidle is in to the tow'r yborne,	
¹ Loved	And kept among his jewels lefe ¹ and dear	
² Know not	The hoise vanish'd, I n'ot ² in what manneire,	
	Out of their sight, ye get no more of me.	
³ Leave	But this I lete ³ in lust and jollity	
	This Cambuscan his loides feastyng,	
	Till that well nigh the day began to spring	10660

PARS SECUNDA

⁴ Nurse	The nounce ⁴ of digestioun, the sleep,	
⁵ Notice	'Gan on them wink, and bade them taken keep, ⁵	
	That muchel drink and labour will have rest	
⁶ Kissed	And with a gaping mouth them all he kest, ⁶	
	And said, that it was time to lie adown,	
	Foi blood was in his dominatioún	
	Cherisheth blood, natúre's friend, quod he.	
	They thanken him gaping, by two, by three,	
	And every wight 'gan draw him to his rest,	
	As sleep them bade, they took it foi the best	10670
	Their dreames shall not now be told for me,	
⁷ Fume, of wine	Full were then heades of fumosity, ⁷	
	That causoth dream, of which there is no charge *	
⁸ Full day	They sleepen till that it was prime large, ⁸	
⁹ Except	The moste part, but ⁹ it were Canace,	
	She was full measurable, as women be	
	Foi of hei fater had she take hei leave	
	To go to rest, soon after it was eve,	
¹⁰ Made pale	Hei liste not appalled ¹⁰ for to be,	

* 'No charge' No consequence to be apprehended.

Nor on the morrow unfeastly ¹ for to see,	10680	¹ Unfit for a feast
And slept hei fiste sleep, and then awoke For such a joy she in hei hearte toke Both of her quainte ² ring, and her murór, That twenty time she changed her colour, And in hei sleep right for the impressiön Of hei murór she had a visiön		² Curious
Wherefore, ere that the sunne 'gan up glide, She clepeth ³ upon her mistress her beside, And saide, that hei liste for t' arise		³ Calleth
These olde women, that be gladly wise, As is hei mistress, answer'd her anon, And said, 'Madame, whither will ye gon Thus early ² for the folk be all in rest'	10690	
'I will,' quod she, 'arisen (for me lest No longer for to sleep) and walk about'		
Her mistress clepeth women a great rout, And up they risen, well a ten or twelve, Up riseth fieshe Canace heiselve, As ruddy and bight, as the younge sun, That in the Ram is fou degrees yrun,	10700	
No higher was he, when she ready was, And forth she walketh easily a pace, Amayed after the lusty ⁴ season sote ⁵ Lightly for to play, and walken on foot, Nought but with five or six of her memie, ⁶ And in a trench forth in the park go'th she		⁴ Pleasant ⁵ Sweet ⁶ Servants
The vapour, which that from the earthe glode, ⁷ Maketh the sun to seeme ruddy and broad But natheless, it was so fair a sight, That it made all their heartes for to light, ⁸ What for the season, and the morrowning, And for the fowles that she hearde sing	10710	⁷ Glided ⁸ Lighthen

¹ Knew	For ight anon she wiste ¹ what they meant	10713
	Right by then song, and knew all their intent.	
² Nucleus, chief matter	The knotte, ² why that every tale is told,	
³ Inclina- tion	If it be tained till the lust ³ be cold	
⁴ Some while	Of them, that have it hearken'd after yore, ⁴	
	The savour passeth ever longer the more,	
	For fulsomeness of the prolixity	
	And by that same reason thinketh me	10720
	I should unto the knotte condescend,	
	And maken of her walking soon an end.	
⁵ Quite dry	Amid a tree for-dry, ⁵ as white as chalk,	
	As Canace was playing in her walk,	
	There sat a falcon over her head full high,	
	That with a piteous voice so 'gan to cry,	
	That all the wood resounded of her cry,	
	And beaten had herself so piteously	
	With both her winges, till the rede blood	
	Ran endelong the tree, there as she stood	10730
⁶ Constant- ly	And ever in one ⁶ alway she cried and shrigh ⁷ ,	
⁷ Shreked	And with her beak herselfen she so twigh ⁸ ,	
⁸ Plucked	That there n'is tiger, ne no cruel beast,	
	That dwelleth either in wood, or in forést,	
	That n'old have wept, if that he weepen could,	
	For sorrow of her, she shright alway so loud	
	For there was never yet no man on live,	
	If that he could a falcon well descive,	
	That heard of such another of fauiness	
	As well of plumage, as of gentleness,	10740
	Of shape, of all that might yreckon'd be	
	A falcon peregrine seemed she	
⁹ Strange	Of fremde ⁹ land, and ever as she stood,	
	She swooned now and now for lack of blood,	
	Till well-nigh is she fallen from the tree	
	This faire kinge's daughter Canace,	

That on her finger bare the quante ¹ ling,	10747	¹ Curious.
Through which she understood well every thing		
That any fowl may in his leden ² sayn,		² Leden- guage
And could answer him in his leden agam,		
Hath understanden what this falcon said,		
And well-nigh for the ruth ³ almost she deyde: ⁴		³ Pity ⁴ Died.
And to the tree she go'th full hastily,		
And on this falcon looketh piteously,		
And held her lap abroad, for well she wist		
The falcon muste fallen from the twist ⁵		⁵ Twig
When that she swooned next, for faute ⁶ of blood		⁶ Want
A longe while to waiten her she stood,		
Till at the last she spake in this mannere		
Unto the hawk, as ye shall after hear	10760	
'What is the cause, if it be for to tell,		
That ye be in this furial ⁷ pain of hell?'		⁷ Raging
Quod Canace unto this hawk above,		
'Is this for sorrow of death, or loss of love?		
For as I trow, these be the causes two,		
That causen most a gentle hearte woe.		
Of other harm it needeth not to speak,		
For ye yourself upon yourself awreke, ⁸		⁸ Revenge.
Which proveth well, that either ire or diede ⁹		⁹ Fear
Must be encheson ¹⁰ of your cruel deed,	10770	¹⁰ Cause.
Since that I see none other wight you chase		
For the love of God, as do yourselven grace		
Or what may be your help? for west nor east		
Ne saw I never ere now no bird nor beast,		
That fared with himself so piteously		
Ye slay me with your sorrow verily,		
I have of you so great compassioun		
For Godde's love come from the tree adown;		
And as I am a kinge's daughter true,		
If that I verily the causes knew	10780	

¹ Uneasiness	Of your disease, ¹ if it lay in my might, I would amend it, ere that it were night,	10781
² Surely	As wisely ² help me the great God of kind ³	
³ Nature	And herbes shall I right enough yfind, To healen with your huntres hastily'	
⁴ Shreked	Then shught ⁴ this falcon yet more piteously Than ever she did, and fell to ground anon, And li'th aswoon, as dead as li'th a stone, Till Canace hath in her lap her take, Unto that time she 'gan of swoon awake	10790
⁵ Awoke	And after that she out of swoon abraid, ⁵	
⁶ Language	Right in her hawkes' leden ⁶ thus she said 'That pity runneth soon in gentle heart (Feeling his similitude in paine's smart) Is proved alle day, as men may see, As well by work as by authority, ⁷	
Text		
⁸ Sheweth	For gentle heart kitheth ⁸ gentleness I see well, that ye have on my distress Compassioun, my faire Canace, Of very womanly benignity,	10800
⁹ Better	That nature in your principles hath set But for none hope for to fare the bet, ⁹ But for t' obey unto your heart free, And for to maken other yware by me, As by the whelp chastised is the lion, Right for that cause and that conclusioun, While that I have a leisure and a space,	
¹⁰ Depart	Mine harm I will confessen ere I pace ¹⁰ And ever while that one her sorrow told, That other wept, as she to water wold, Till that the falcon bade her to be still, And with a sigh right thus she said her till	10810
¹¹ Same	'There I was bred, (alas that ilke ¹¹ day!) And foster'd in a rock of marble gray	

So tenderly, that nothing ailed me	10815	
I ne wist not what was adversitey,		
Till I could flee full high under the sky		
'Then dwell'd a tercelet ¹ me faste by,		¹ Male hawk.
That seemed well of alle gentleness,		
All were he full of treason and falsenés	10820	
It was so wrapped under humble chere, ²		² Demeanour
And under hue of truth in such mannée,		
Under pleasance, and under busy pain,		
That no wight could have ween'd he coulde feign,		
So deep in gaim he dyed his colouris		
Right as a serpent hideth him under flowers,		
Till he may see his time for to bite,		
Right so this god of love's hypocrite		
Doth so his ceremonies and obeisance,		
And keep'th in semblant all his observance,	10830	
That souneth ³ unto gentleness of love,		³ Is consonant to
As on a tomb is all the fair above,		
And under is the corpse, such as ye wot;		
Such was this hypocrite both cold and hot,		
And in this wise he served his intent,		
That, save the fiend, none wiste what he meant		
Till he so long had weeped and complain'd,		
And many a year his service to me feign'd,		
Till that mine heart, too piteous and too nice, ⁴		⁴ Foolish
All innocent of his crowned malice,	10840	
Foi-feared of his death, as thoughte me,		
Upon his oathes and his suety,		
Granted him love, on this conditioun,		
That evermore mine honour and renown		
Weie saved, bothe privy and apert, ⁵		⁵ Openly
This is to say, that, after his desert,		
I gave him all mine heart and all my thought,		
(God wot, and he, that other wayes nought,)		

	And took his heart in change of mine for aye	10849
	But sooth is said, gone since is many a day,	
	A true wight and a thief thinken not one	
	‘And when he saw the thing so far ygone,	
	That I had granted him fully my love,	
	In such a guise as I have said above,	
	And given him my true heart as free	
	As he swore that he gave his heart to me,	
	Anon this tiger, full of doubleness,	
	Fell on his knees with so great humbleness,	
¹ Mien	With so high reverence, as by his chere, ¹	
	So like a gentle lover of mannere,	10860
	So ravish’d, as it seemed, for the joy,	
	That never Jason, nor Paris of Troy,	
	Jason ² certes, ne never other man,	
² First of all	Since Lamech was, that alderfirst ² began	
	To loven two, as writen folk befoin,	
³ Since	Ne never sithen ³ the first man was born,	
	Ne coulde man by twenty thousand part	
⁴ Soph isms	Counterfeit the sophimes ⁴ of his art,	
⁵ Shoe	Ne were worthy to unbuckle his galoche, ⁵	
	There doubleness of feigning should approach,	10870
	Ne could so thank a wight, as he did me.	
	His manner was an heaven for to see	
	To any woman, were she never so wise,	
	So painted he and kempt, at point devise,	
	As well his wordes, as his countenance	
	And I so loved him for his obeisance,	
	And for the truth I deemed in his heart,	
	That if so were that any thing him smart,	
⁶ Little	All were it never so lite, ⁶ and I it wist,	
	Methought I felt death at my hearte twist	10880
	And shortly, so farforth this thing is went,	
	That my will was his wille’s instrument,	

<p>This is to say, my will obey'd his will In alle thing, as far as reason fill,¹ Keeping the boundes of my worship ever. Ne never had I thing so lefe,² nor lever,³ As him, God wot, ne never shall no mo</p>	10883	<p>¹ Fell ² Dear ³ Dearer</p>
<p>‘This lasteth longer than a year or two, That I supposed of him nought but good But finally, thus at the last it stood, That fortune woulde that he muste twin⁴ Out of that place which that I was in Where me was woe, it is no question; I cannot make of it description For one thing dare I tellen boldely, I know what is the pain of death thereby, Such harm I felt, for he ne might byleve⁵</p>	10890	<p>⁴ Separate. ⁵ Stay</p>
<p>‘So on a day of me he took his leave, So sorrowful eke, that I ween'd verily, That he had felt as muchel harm as I, When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue But natheless, I thought he was so true, And eke that he repairen should again Within a litle while, sooth to sayn, And reason would eke that he muste go For his honour, as often happ'neth so, That I made virtue of necessity, And took it well, since that it muste be As I best might, I hid from him my sorrow, And took him by the hand, Saint John to borrow,⁶</p>	10900	
<p>And said him thus, “Lo, I am youres all, Be such as I have been to you and shall”</p>	10910	<p>⁶ Witness</p>
<p>‘What he answer'd, it needeth not rehearse; Who can say bet⁷ than he, who can do weise? When he hath all well said, then hath he done.</p>		<p>⁷ Better</p>

	<p> Therefore behoveth him a full long spoon, 10916 That shall eat with a fiend, thus heard I say 'So at the last he muste forth his way, And forth he fi'ith, till he come thore him lest When it came him to purpose for to rest, I trow that he had thulke text in mind, That alle thing iepaning to his kind Gladdeth himself, thus say men as I guess Men loven of proper kind¹ newfangelness, As brides do, that men in cages feed For though thou night and day take of them heed, And strew then cage fan and soft as silk, And give them sugar, honey, bread, and milk, Yet right anon as that his doo' is up, He with his feet will spurnen down his cup, 10930 And to the wood he will, and wormes eat, So newefangle be they of them meat, And loven novelties of proper kind, No gentleness of blood ne may them bind 'So faired this tercelet, alas the day! Though he were gentle boyn, and fresch, and gay, And goodly for to see, and humble, and free, He saw upon a time a kite flee, And suddenly he loved this kite so, That all his love is clean from me ago 10940 And hath his truthe falsed in this wise Thus hath the kite my love in her service, And I am loyn² withouten remedy' And with that word this falcon 'gan to cry, And swooneth eft³ in Canacee's barm⁴ Great was the sorow for that hawke's harm, That Canace and all her women made, They n'isten⁵ how they might the falcon glade⁶ But Canace home bear'th her in her lap, </p>
¹ Their own nature	
² Lost	
³ Again ⁴ Lap	
⁵ Knew not ⁶ Make glad	

And softly in plasters 'gan her wrap,
There as she with hei beak had hurt herselfe

10950

Now cannot Canace but heibes delve
Out of the ground, and maken salyes new
Of heibes precious and fine of hue,
To healen with this hawk, from day to
night

She doth hei business, and all her might
And by hei bedde's head she made a mew,
And cover'd it with velouettes blue,
In sign of truth, that is in woman seen,
And all without the mew is painted green,
In which were painted all these false
fowls,

10960

As be these tidifes, terceletes, and owls,
And pies, on them for to cry and chide,
Right for despite were painted them beside

Thus lete¹ I Canace her hawk keeping
I will no more as now speak of her ینگ,
Till it come eft² to purpose for to sayn,
How that this falcon got her love again
Repentant, as the story telleth us,

¹ Leave.² Again

By mediatiόν of Camballus,
The kinge's son, of which that I you told
But hennesforth I will my process hold
To speak of áventures, and of battailes,
That yet was never heard so great marvailles

10970

First I will tellen you of Cambuscan,
That in his time many a city wan
And after will I speak of Algarsif,
How that he won Theodora to his wife,
For whom full oft in great períl he was,
Ne had he been holpen by the hoise of
brass.

10980

¹ Where

And after will I speak of Camballo,
That fought in listes with the biethien two
For Canace, ere that he might her win,
And there¹ I left I will again begin

10981

" " " " "

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE.

'In faith, Squeri, thou hast thee well acquit 10985
And gently, I praise well thy wit,'

Quod the Franklin, 'considering thine youth,

So feelingly thou speakest, Sir, I aloue¹ thee

As to my doom,² there is none that is here,

Of eloquence that shall be thy peer,

10990

If that thou live, God give thee goode chance,

And in virtue send thee continuance,

For of thy speaking I have great danty

I have a son, and by the Trinity

It were me levei³ than twenty pound worth land,

Though it right now were fallen in my hand,

He were a man of such discretioun,

As that ye be fie on possession,

But⁴ if a man be virtuous withal

I have my sone snubbed,⁵ and yet shall,

11000

For he to virtue listeth not t' intend,⁶

But for to play at dice, and to dispend,

And lose all that he hath, is his usage,

And he had lever talken with a page,

Than to commune with any gentle wight,

There he might learen gentilless aright'

'Straw for your gentillesse,' quod our Host.

¹ Praise

² Judgment

³ Rather

⁴ Unless

⁵ Rebuked

⁶ Apply

<p>¹ Knowest</p>	<p>‘What? Frankeln, pardie, Sn, well thou wost,¹ 11008 That each of you must tellen at the lest A tale or two, or breaken his behost’ ‘That know I well, Sn,’ quod the Frankeln, ‘I pray you haveth me not in disdaim, Though I to this man speak a word or two’ ‘Tell on thy tale, withouten wordes mo’ • ‘Gladly, Sn Host,’ quod he, ‘I will obey Unto your will, now heark’neth what I say, I will you not contiaien in no wise, As fai as that my wittes may suffice I pray to God that it may pleasen you, Then wot I well that it is good enow 11020</p>
	<p>‘These olde gentle Bretons in then days Of diverse áventures maden lays, Rhymed in their fiste Breton tongue, Which layes with their instruments they sung, Or elles readen them for their pleasánce, And one of them have I in remembránce, Which I shall say with good will as I can.</p>
<p>² Plain</p>	<p>‘But, Sns, because I am a boiel² man, At my beginning fist I you béseech Have me excused of my rude speech 11030 I learned never rhetonic certáin, Thing that I speak, it must be bare and plain I slept never on the mount of Parnasso, Nor learned Marcus Tullius Cicero</p>
<p>³ Doubt</p>	<p>Colours ne know I none, withouten diede,³ But such colours as growen in the mead, Or elles such as men dye with or paint,</p>
<p>⁴ Strange</p>	<p>Colours of rhetonic be to me quant,⁴ My spirit feeleth not of such mattere But if you list my tale shall ye hear 11040</p>

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

In Armoic', that called is Bietagne, 11041

There was a knight, that lov'd and did his pain

To serve a lady in his bestè wise,

And many a labou, many a great emprise

He for his lady wrought, ere she were won.

For she was one the fanest under sun,

And eke thereto come of so high kindied,

That well unnethes¹ durst this knight for dread

Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress

But at the last, she for his worthiness, 11050

And namely for his meek obeisance,

Hath such a pity caught of his penánce,

That privily she fell of his accord

To take him for her husband and her lord,

(Of such lordship as men have o'er then wives,)

And, for to lead the more in bliss then lives,

Of his free will he swore her as a knight,

That never in all his life he day nor night

Ne shoulde take upon him no mast'ry

Against her will, nor kithes² her jealousy, 11060

But her obey, and follow her will in all,

As any lover to his lady shall.

Save that the name of sovereignty

That would he have for shame of his degree.

She thanked him, and with full great humbless

She saide, 'Sir, since of your gentleness

Ye proffer me to have so large a reign,

Ne woulde God never betwixt us twain,

As in my guilt, were either war or strife.

Sir, I will be your humble true wife, 11070

¹ Scarcely

² Shew

¹ Burst	Have here my truth, till that mine hearte brest ^{'1} Thus be they both in quiet and in rest 11072 For one thing, Snes, safely daie I say, That friendes ever each othei must obey, If they will longe holden company Love will not be constrained by mast'ry When mast'ly cometh, the god of Love anon Beateth his wings, and, farewell, he is gone Love is a thing, as any spuit, free
² By nature ³ Slave	Women of kind ² desuen liberty, 11080 And not to be constrained as a thrall, ³ And so do men, if soothly I say shall Look who that is most patient in love, He is at his advantage - all above Patience is an high virtue certain, For it vanquisheth, as these clerkes sayn, Thinges that rigour never should attain For every word men may not chide or plain
⁴ Prosper	Learneth to suffer, or, so may I go, ⁴ Ye shall it learn whether ye will or no 11090 For in this world certain no wight there is, That he ne doth or saith sometime amiss Iie, sickness, or constellati3n, Wine, woe, or changing of complexi3n, Causeth full oft to do amiss or speaken
⁵ Revenged	On every wrong a man may not be wroken ⁵ After the time must be tempeance
⁶ Is capable of	To every wight that can ⁶ of governance And thecfoie hath this worthy wise knight
⁷ Promised ⁸ Surely,	(To liven in ease) suff'rance hei behight, ⁷ 11100 And she to him full wisely ⁸ 'gan to swear, That never should there be default in hei Here may men see an humble wife accord

* 'He is at his advantage' Is in possession of every advantage

Thus hath she take her servant and her lord, 11104

Servant in love, and lord in marriage

Then was he both in lordship and servage²

Servage² nay, but in lordship all above,

Since he hath both his lady and his love

His lady certes, and his wife also,

The which that law of love accordeth to 11110

And when he was in this prosperity,

Home with his wife he go'th to his country,

Not far from Penmark, there his dwelling was,

Where as he liveth in bliss and in solas.¹

Who could tell, but² he had wedded be,

The joy, the ease, and the prosperity,

That is betwixt an husband and his wife?

A year and more lasteth this blissful life,

Till that this knight, of which I spake of thus,

That of Caniud was cleped Arvnagus, 11120

Shope³ him to go and dwell a year or twain

In Engleland, that clep'd was eke Britán,

To seek in aimes worship and honour,

(For all his lust⁴ he set in such labour)

And dwelte there two year, the book saith thus

Now will I stint⁵ of this Arvnagus,

And speak I will of Dongen his wife,

That loveth her husband as her heart's life

For his absénce weepeth she and siketh,⁶

As do these noble wives when them liketh, 11130

She mourneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, plaineth,

Desire of his présence her so distraimeth,

That all this wide world she set at nought.

Her friendes, which that knew her heavy thought,

Comfórtén her in all that ever they may,

They preachen her, they tell her night and day,

That causeless she slay'th herself, alas!

¹ Enjoyment

² Unless

³ Prepared.

⁴ Delight.

⁵ Cease

⁶ Sigheth.

¹ Assidui-
ty

And every comfort possible in this case 11138

They do to her, with all their business,¹
All for to make her leave her heaviness

By process, as ye knowen euer each one,
Men may so longe graven in a stone,
Till some figúre therein imprinted be
So long have they comforted her, till she
Received hath, by hope and by reasón,
The imprinting of their consolatiún,
Through which her greate sorrow 'gan assuage,
She may not alway duen in such rage.

And eke Arviagus, in all this care,
Hath sent his letters home of his welfare, 11150
And that he will come hastily again,
Or else had this sorrow her hearte slain

Her fiendes saw her sorrow 'gan to slake,
And prayden hei on knees for Godde's sake
To come and ioamen in their company,
Away to driven hei dark fantasy.

And finally she granted that request,
For well she saw that it was for the best.

Now stood her castle faste by the sea,
And often with her friendes walked she, 11160
Her to disporten on the bank on high,

² Saw

Where as she many a ship and barge sic,²
Sailing then couse, where as them list to go
But then was that a parcel of hei woe,
For to herself full oft, 'Alas!' said she,
'Is there no ship, of so many as I see,
Will bingen home my lord? then were my heart
All warish'd³ of his bitter paine's smart'

^a Cured

Another time would she sit and think,
And cast her eyen downward from the bunk, 11170
But when she saw the grisly rockes blake,⁴

Black.

For very fear so would her hearte quake,	11172	
That on her feet she might her not sustene		
Then would she sit adown upon the green,		
And piteously into the sea behold,		
And say ight thus, with careful sikes ¹ cold.		¹ Sighs
‘Eterne God’ that through thy púrveyance		
Leadest this world by certain governance,		
In idle, ² as men say, ye nothing make;		² In vain.
But, Lord, these grisly fiendly rockes blake,	11180	
That seemen rather a foul confusión		
Of work, than any fan creatiún		
Of such a perfect wise God and stable,		
Why have ye wrought this work unreasonable’		
For by this work, north, south, nor west, nor		
east,		
There n’is ³ yfoster’d man, nor bud, nor beast.		³ Is not.
It doth no good, to my wit, but annoyeth.		
See ye not, Lord, how mankind it destroyeth?		
An hundred thousand bodies of mankind		
Have rockes slain, all be they not in mind,	11190	
Which mankind is so fair part of thy work,		
Thou madest it like to thine owen mark ⁴		⁴ Image.
Then, seemeth it, ye had a great chertée ⁵		⁵ Love.
Toward mankind, but how then may it be,		
That ye such meanes make it to destroyen ⁶		
Which meanes do no good, but ever annoyen		
‘I wot well, clerkes will say as them lest ⁶		⁶ Pleaseth
By arguments, that all is for the best,		
Though I ne can the causes nought yknow,		
But thilke ⁷ God that made the wind to blow,	11200	⁷ That
As keep my lord, this is my conclusiún.		
To clerkes let ⁸ I all disputation		⁸ Leave.
But woulde God, that all these rockes blake		
Were sunken into helle for his sake		

These rockes slay mine hearte for the fear ' 11205

Thus would she say with many a piteous tear

Hei friendes saw that it was no disport

To roamen by the sea, but discomfort,

And shape them for to playen somewhere else

They ledden hei by rivers and by wells, 11210

And eke in othei places délitables,

They dancen, and they play at chess and tables

So on a day, ight in the morrow-tide,

Unto a garden that was there beside,

In which that they had made thei ordinance

Of victual, and of other purveyance,

They go and play them all the longe day ·

And this was on the sixte morrow of May,

Which May had painted with his softe showers

This garden full of leaves and of flowers 11220

And craft of manne's hand so curiously

Arayed had this garden truely,

That never was there garden of such pice,

But if it were the very Paradise

Th' odour of flow'ies, and the freshe sight,

Would have ymaked any hearte hight

¹ Unless. That ever was born, but if¹ too great sicknéss

Or too great sorrow held it in distress,

So full it was of beauty and pleasance

² Begun. And after dinner gonnen² they to dance 11230

And sing also, save Dorigen alone,

Which made alway hei cónplamt and hei moan,

For she ne saw him on the dance go,

That was hei husband, and her love also

But natheless she must a time abide,

And with good hope let her sorrow slide

Upon this dance, amonges other men,

Danced a squier before Dorigen,

That fiesher was and jollier of array,	11239	
As to my doom, ¹ than is the month of May		¹ Judgment
He singeth, danceth, passing any man,		
That is or was since that the world began,		
Therewith he was, if men should him descive,		
One of the beste-fairing ² men on live,		² Best-looking
Young, strong, and virtuous, and rich, and wise,		
And well belov'd, and holden in great prisse ³		³ Praise
And shortly, if the sooth I tellen shall,		
Unweeting ⁴ of this Dougen at all,		⁴ Unknown
This lusty squer, seivant to Venus,		
Which that ycleped was Aurehus,	11250	
Had lov'd her best of any creature		
Two year and moire, as was his aventure ⁵		⁵ Fortune
But never durst he tell her his gnevance,		
Withouten cup he drank all his penance		
He was despaied, nothing durst he say,		
Save in his songes somewhat would he 'wray ⁶		⁶ Betray
His woe, as in a general complaining,		
He said, he lov'd, and was belov'd nothing		
Of suche matter made he many lays,		
Songes, complaintes, roundels, vnelays,	11260	
How that he durste not his sorrow tell,		
But languisheth, as doth a Fury in hell,		
And die he must, he said, as did Echo		
For Narcissus, that durst not tell her woe		
In other manner than ye hear me say,		
Ne durst he not to her his woe bewray,		
Save that paraventure sometime at dances,		
There ⁷ younge folk keepen their observances,		⁷ Where.
It may well be he looked on her face		
In such a wise, as man that asketh grace,	11270	
But nothing wiste she of his intent		
Nathless it happen'd, ere they thennes went,		

	Because that he was her neighebour,	11273
	And was a man of woiship and honóur,	
¹ Time past.	And had yknowen him of time yore, ¹	
	They fell in speech, and foith aye more and more	
	Unto his purpose diew Aurelius,	
	And when he saw his time, he saide thus	
	'Madam,' quod he, 'by God that this world made,	
² Glad	So that I wist it might youi hearte glade, ²	11280
	I would that day, that youi Arviagus	
	Went over sea, that I, Aurelius,	
³ Where	Had went there ³ I should never come agam,	
	For well I wot my sevice is in vain	
	My guerdon n'is but bursting of mine heart	
	Madame, rue upon my paine's smart,	
	For with a word ye may me slay or save	
⁴ Buried	Here at your feet God would that I were grave ⁴	
	I ne have as now no leisuie more to say	
⁵ Cause ⁶ Die.	Have mercy, sweet, or you will do ⁵ me dey' ⁶	11290
	She 'gan to look upon Aurelius,	
	'Is this your will (quod she) and say ye thus?	
⁷ Before	Never erst ⁷ (quod she) ne wist I what ye meant	
	But now, Aurelie, I know your intent	
⁸ That.	By thilke ⁸ God that gave me soul and life,	
	Ne shall I never be an untrue wife	
	In word nor work, as far as I have wit,	
	I will be his to whom that I am knyt.	
	Take this for final answer as of me'	
	But after that in play thus saide she	11300
	'Aurelie, (quod she,) by high God above	
	Yet will I gianten you to be your love,	
	(Since I you see so piteously complain,)	
⁹ From end to end.	Looke, what day that endelong ⁹ Bretágne	
	Ye remove all the rockes, stone by stone,	
¹⁰ Prevent	That they ne letten ¹⁰ ship nor boat to gon,	

I say, when ye have made the coast so clean	11307	
Of rockes, that there n'is no stone yseen,		
Then will I love you best of any man,		
Have here my truth, in all that ever I can,		
For well I wot that it shall never betide		
Let such folly out of your hearte glide		
What deintee ¹ should a man have in his life		¹ Value
For to go love another manne's wife,		
That hath her body when that ever him liketh?		
Auehus full often sore siketh, ²		² Sigheth
'Is there none other grace in you?' quod he		
'No, by that Lord,' quod she, 'that maked me'		
Woe was Auehe when that he thus heard,		
And with a sorrowful heart he thus answer'd	11320	
'Madám,' quod he, 'this were an impossible		
Then must I die of sudden death horrible'		
And with that word he turned him anon		
Then come her other friendes many one,		
And in the alleys roamed up and down,		
And nothing wist of this conclusiún,		
But suddenly begunnen revel new,		
Till that the brighte sun had lost his hue,		
For th' orizon had left the sun his light,		
(This is as much to say as it was night,)	11330	
And home they go in muth and in solas, ³		³ Enjoyment.
Save only wretch Auehus, alas!		
He to his house is gone with sorrowful heart.		
He saith, he may not from his death astart ⁴		⁴ Escape
Him seemeth, that he felt his hearte cold.		
Up to the heaven his handes 'gan he hold,		
And on his knees bare he set him down,		
And in his raving said his orisoun ⁵		⁵ Prayer
For very woe out of his wit he brad, ⁶		⁶ Wander- ed
He n'iste ⁷ what he spake, but thus he said,	11340	⁷ Knew not.

	With piteous heart his plant hath he begun	11341
	Unto the gods, and first unto the Sun	
	He said, 'Apollo' God and governour	
	Of every plante, herbe, tree, and flow'ri,	
	That givest after thy declinacioun	
	To each of them his time and his season,	
¹ Dwelling	As that thine harbour ¹ changeth low and high,	
	Lord Phœbus' cast thy merciable eye	
² Lost	On wretch Amelie, which that am but loin ²	
	Lo, lord, my lady hath my death ysworn	11350
³ Unless	Withouten guilt, but ³ thy benignity	
	Upon my deadly heart have some pity.	
⁴ Please	For well I wot, Lord Phœbus, if you lest, ⁴	
	Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best	
⁵ Describe	Now voucheth safe, that I may you devise ⁵	
⁶ Helped	How that I may be help ⁶ and in what wise	
⁷ Bright	'Your blissful sister, Lucina the sheen, ⁷	
	That of the sea is chief goddess and queen,	
	Though Neptunus have deity in the sea,	
	Yet emperess aboven him is she	11360
	Ye know well, lord, that right as her desire	
⁸ Quickened.	Is to be quick'd ⁸ and lighted of your fire,	
	For which she foll'weth you full busily,	
	Right so the sea desueth naturally	
	To follow her, as she that is goddés	
	Both in the sea and rivers more and less.	
	Wherefore, Lord Phœbus, this is my request,	
⁹ Cause	Do this miracle, or do ⁹ mine hearte brest, ¹⁰	
¹⁰ Burst	That now next at this oppositioun,	
	Which in the sign shall be of the Liôn,	11370
	As prayeth her so great a flood to bring,	
	That five fathóm at least it overspring	
	The highest rock in Armoric' Bretaigne,	
	And let this flood enduren yeares twain.	

Then certes to my lady may I say,	11375	
Holdeth you hest, ¹ the rockes be away.		¹ Promise
Lord Phœbus, this miracle do for me,		
Pray her she go no faster couse than ye,		
I say this, prayeth you sister that she go		
No faster couse than ye these yeaes two	11380	
Then shall she be even at full alway,		
And spring-flood lasten bothe night and day		
And but she vouchesafe in such mannée		
To gianten me my sovereign lady dear,		
Pray her to synken every rock adown		
Into her owen darke regiou		
Under the ground, there Pluto dwelleth in,		
Or nevermore shall I my lady win		
‘Thy temple in Delphos will I barefoot seek		
Lord Phœbus ¹ see the teares on my cheek,	11390	
And on my pain have some compassioun.’		
And with that word, in sorrow he fell adown,		
And longe time he lay forth in a trance		
His brother, which that knew of his penance,		
Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought		
Despaned in this torment and this thought		
Let I this woful creature be;		
Choose he for me whether he will live or die.		
Arvnagus with health and great honour		
(As he that was of chivalry the flow’r)	11400	
Is comen home, and oþer worthy men.		
Oh, blissful art thou now, thou Dorigen!		
Thou hast thy lusty husband in thine arms,		
The freshe knight, the worthy man of arms,		
That loveth thee, as his own heart’s life		
Nothing list him to be imaginatif, ²		² He cared not to fancy
If any wight had spoke, while he was out,		
To her of love; he had of that no doubt;		

¹ Inclined	<p>He not intendeth¹ to no such mattérie, 11401 But danceth, jousteth, and maketh merry cheer And thus in joy and bliss I let them dwell, And of the sick Auehus will I tell In languor and in torment furious Two year and more lay wretch Auehus, Ere any foot on earth he mighte gon, Nor comfort in this time ne had he none, Save of his brother, which that was a clerk He knew of all this woe and all this weik. For to none other créature céitan Of this matter he durste no word sayn, 11421 Under his breast he bare it more secree, Than e'er did Pamphilus for Galatee His breast was whole withouten for to seen, But in his heart aye was the arrow keen, And well ye know that of a sursanure⁷ In surgery is perilous the cure, But² men might touch the arrow or come thereby His brother weepeth and waileth privily, Till at the last him fell in rémembrance, That while he was at Orleans in Fiance, 11431 As younge clerkes, that be likerous³ To readen artes that be curious, Seeken in every halk⁴ and every hern⁵ Particular sciénces for to learn, He him remember'd, that upon a day At Oileans in study a book he say⁶ Of magic natural, which his fellow, That was that time a bachelor of law, All⁷ were he there to learn another craft, Had privily upon his desk ylaft, 11441 Which book spake much of opérations</p>
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* 'A sursanure' Wound healed on the surface

Touching the eight-and-twenty mansions	11442	
That 'longen to the Moon, and such folly		
As in our dayes n'is not worth a fly		
For holy church's faith, in our believe,		
Ne suff'reth no illusion us to grieve		
And when this book was in his remembrance,		
Anon for joy his hearte 'gan to dance,		
And to himself he sayed privily,		
'My brother shall be warish'd ¹ hastily	11450	¹ Cured
For I am sike ² that there be sciences,		² Sure
By which men maken divers appearances,		
Such as these subtil tragetoures ³ play		³ Players
For oft at feastes have I well heard say,		
That tragetours, within an halle large,		
Have made come in a water and a barge,		
And in the halle rowen up and down		
Sometime hath seemed come a grim lion,		
And sometime flow'ies spring as in a mead,		
Sometime a vine, and grapes white and rede,	11460	
Sometime a castle all of lime and stone,		
And when them liketh, voideth it anon.		
Thus seemeth it to every manne's sight		
'Now then conclude I thus, if that I might		
At Orleans some olde fellow find,		
That hath these Moone's mansions in mind,		
Or other magic natural above,		
He should well make my brother have his		
love		
For with an' appearance a clerk may make		
To manne's sight, that all the rockes blake	11470	
Of Bretagne were yvoided every one,		
And shippes by the brinke come and gon,		
And in such form endure a day or two		
Then were my brother warish'd of his woe,		

¹ Promise	Then must she needes holden hei behest, ¹	11475
² Least	Or elles he shall shame hei at the lest ²	
	What should I make a longer tale of this ⁷	
	Unto his brother's bed he comen is, And such comfórt he gave him, for to gon To Oileans, that he up start anon,	11480
³ Gone	And on his way forthward then is he fare, ³	
⁴ Relieved	In hope for to be lissed ⁴ of his care	
	When they were come almost to that city, But if it were a two furlong or thre, A young cleik roaming by himself they met,	
⁵ Shortly	Which that in Latin thriftily ⁵ them giet ⁶	
⁶ Greeted.	And after that he said a wonder thing, 'I know,' quod he, 'the cause of you coming' And ere they farther any foote went,	
	He told them all that was in then intent	11490
⁷ Days	This Breton clerk him asked of fellows, The which he had yknown in olde dawes, ⁷ And he answe'r'd him that they deade were, For which he wept full often many a tear.	
	Down off his horse Aurehus light anon, And forth with this magicián is gone Home to his house, and made them well at ease	
	Them lacked no vitáille that might them please So well-arrayed house as there was one, Aurehus in his life saw never none	11500
	He shewed him, ere they went to suppeie, Forestes, parkes, full of wilde deer There saw he hautes with then hornes high, The greatest that were ever seen with eye He saw of them an hundred slain with hounds, And some with arrows bled of bitter wounds He saw, when voided were the wilde deer,	

These falconeis upon a fan rivéie, 11508

That with then hawkes have the heron slain

Then saw he knightes jousten in a plain
And after this he did him such pleasánce,
That he him shew'd his lady on a dance,
On which himselven danced, as him thought
And when this master, that this magic wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapp'd his handes two,
And, farewell, all the revel is ago

And yet removed they never out of the house,

While they saw all these sightes marvellous,

But in his study, there¹ his bookes be,

They saten still, and no wight but they three 11520

To him this master called his squier,

And said him thus, 'May we go to supper ?

Almost an hou it is, I undertake,

Since I you bade our supper for to make,

When that these worthy men wenten with me

Into my study, there my bookes be'

'Sn,' quod this squier, 'when it liketh you,

It is all ready, though ye will right now'

'Go we then sup,' quod he, 'as for the best,

These amorous folk sometime must have rest' 11530

At after supper fell they in treaty

What summe should this master's guerdon be,

To remove all the rockes of Bretagne,

And eke from Geronde to the mouth of Seime

He made it strange,² and swore, so God him save, ^{2 A difficulty}

Less than a thousand pound he would not have,

Ne gladly for that sum he would not gon³ ^{3 Go}

Aurelius with blissful heart anon

Answered thus, 'Fie on a thousand pound'

This wide world, which that men say is round, 11540

I would it give, if I were lord of it

¹ Pledged	This bargain is full-drove, for we be knit, ¹	11542
² Sloth	Ye shall be payed truly by my truth But looketh, for no negligence or slouth, ²	
³ For a pledge	Ye tarry us here no longer than to-morrow' 'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have here my faith to borrow' ³ To bed is gone Auehus when him lest, And well-nigh all that night he had his rest, What for his labour, and his hope of bliss,	
⁴ Relief	His woful heart of penance had a liss ⁴	11550
⁵ Where	Upon the morrow when that it was day, To Bretagne taken they the nighte way, Aurel', and this magician him beside, And be descended there ⁵ they would abide And this was, as the bookes me remember, The colde frosty season of December	
⁶ A kind of brass	Phœbus wax'd old, and hued like laton, ⁶ That in his hote declinaciôn Shone as the burned gold, with streames bright, But now in Capricorn adown he light,	11560
	Where as he shone full pale, I dare well sayn The bitter frostes with the sleet and rain Destroyed have the green in every yard Janus sits by the fire with double beard, And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine Before him stands brawn of the tusked swine, And <i>nowel</i> ⁷ crieth every lusty man Auehus in all that ever he can, Doth to his master cheer and reverence, And prayeth him to do his diligence	11570
⁷ Pity.	To bringen him out of his paine's smart, Or with a sword that he would slit his heart. This subtle clerk such ruth ⁷ hath on this man, That night and day he speed'th him, that he can,	

* 'Nowel' A festive cry See note

To wait a time of his conclusion,	11575	
This is to say, to make illusion,		
By such an appearance or jugglery,		
(I can ¹ no termes of astrology,)		¹ Know
That she and every wight should ween and say,		
That of Bietagne the rockes were away,	11580	
Or elles they were sunken under ground		
So at the last he hath his time yfound		
To make his japes ² and his wretchedness		² Tricks
Of such a superstitious cursedness		
His tables Toletanes forth he brought		
Full well corrected, that there lacked nought,		
Neither his collect, nor his expanse years,		
Neithe his rootes, nor his other gears,		
As be his centies, and his arguments,		
And his proportional convenients	11590	
For his equatíons in every thing		
And by his eighte spheres in his working,		
He knew full well how far Alnath was shove		
From the head of thilk fix ³ Aries above,		³ That fixed
That in the ninthe sphere consider'd is.		
Full subtley he calculed all this		
When he had found his firste mansion,		
He knew the remnant by proportion,		
And knew the using of his moone well,		
And in whose face, and term, and every deal,	11600	
And knew full well the moone's mansion		
Accordant to his operation,		
And knew also his other observances,		
For such illusions and such meschances, ⁴		⁴ Mis- chiefs
As heathen folk used in thilke days		
For which no longer maketh he delays,		
But through his magic, for a day or tway,		
It seemed all the rockes were away		

	<p>Aurelius, which that despaned is, 11609 Whether he shall have his love, or faire amiss, Awarteth night and day on this miracle And when he knew that there was no obstacle, That voided were these rockes every one, Down to his master's feet he fell anon, And said, 'I, woful wretch Aurelius, Thank you, my lord, and lady mine Venus, That me have holpen from my cares cold' And to the temple his way forth hath he hold, There as he knew he should his lady see And when he saw his time, anon right he 11620 With dreadful¹ heart and with full humble cheere² Saluted bath his sovereign lady dear</p>
<p>¹ Fearful ² Deportment.</p>	<p>'My rightful Lady,' quod this woful man, 'Whom I most dread, and love, as I best can, And lothest were of all this world displease, N'ere³ it that I for you have such disease,⁴ That I must die here at your foot anon, Nought would I tell how me is woe-begone But certes either must I die or 'plain, Ye slay me guileless for very pain 11630 But of my death though that ye have no ruth, Aviseth you, ere that ye break your truth Repenteth you for thilke God above, Ere ye me slay, because that I you love For, Madam, well ye wot what ye have hight,⁵ Not that I challenge anything of right Of you, my sovereign lady, but of grace, But in a garden yond', in such a place, Ye wot right well what ye behighten me, And in mine hand your truthe plighthen ye, 11640 To love me best, God wot ye sayed so, Although that I unworthy be thereto,</p>
<p>³ Were not ⁴ Uneasiness</p>	
<p>⁵ Promised.</p>	

Madám, I speak it for the honour of you, 11643
 More than to save my heart's life right now
 I have done so as ye commanded me,
 And if ye vouchesafe, ye may go see
 Do as you list, have your behest in mind,
 For, quick or dead, right there ye shall me find
 In you li'th all to do¹ me live or dey,
 But well I wot the rockes be away' 11650

¹ Cause

He tak'th his leave, and she astounded stood,
 In all her face n'as² one drop of blood
 She weened never have come in such a trap
 'Alas!' quod she, 'that ever this should hap'

² Was not

For ween'd I never by possibility,
 That such a monster or marvel might be,
 It is against the process of nature'
 And home she go'th a sorrowful creature,
 For very fear unnethes³ may she go
 She weepeth, waileth, all a day or two, 11660
 And swooneth, that it ruthe was to see
 But why it was, to no wight tolde she,
 For out of town was gone Alviragus
 But to herself she spake, and sayed thus,
 With face pale, and with full sorry cheer,
 In her complaint, as ye shall after hear
 'Alas!' quod she, 'on thee, Fortune, I 'plain,
 That unware hast me wrapped in thy chain
 From which to 'scapen, wot I no succou',
 Save only death, or elles dishonour 11670

³ Scarcely

One of these two behoveth me to choose.
 But natheless, yet had I lever⁴ lose
 My life, than of my body have a shame,
 Or know myselfen false, or lose my name;
 And with my death I may be quit ywis⁵
 Hath there not many a noble wife ere this,

⁴ Rather⁵ Certainly

	And many a maid yslain herself, alas! Rather than with hei body do trespass? Yes, certes, lo, these stoness bear witness ' When thirty tyants full of cursedness Had slain Phidon in Athens at the foast, They cômmanded his daughters for t' arrest, And bringen them before them in despite All naked, to fulfil then foul delight, And in their father's blood they made them dance Upon the pavement, God give them mischance For which these woful maidens full of deað, Rather than they would lose then maidenhead, They prively been stait into a well,	11677
¹ Drowned	And drent ¹ themselven, as the bookes tell 'They of Messene let inquire and seek Of Lacedomie fifty maidens eke, On which they woulden do then lechery But there was none of all that company That she n'as slain, and with a glad intent Chose rather for to dien, than assent To be oppressed of then maidenhead. Why should I then to dien be in deað? ' Lo, eke the tyant Aristochides, That lov'd a maid hight Stimphalides, When that hei father slain was on a night, Unto Diana's temple go'th she right, And hent ² the image in hei handes two, From which image would she never go, ³ Pull No wight hei handes might off it arrace, ³ Till she was slain right in the selve place ' Now since that maidens hadden such despite To be defouled with man's foul delight, ⁴ Slay Well ought a wife rather herselven slo, ⁴ Than be defouled, as it thinketh me	11690 11700
		11710

'What shall I say of Hasdrubale's wife, 11711
 That at Carthage bereft herself her life?
 For when she saw that Romans won the town,
 She took her children all, and skipt adown
 Into the fire, and chose rather to die,
 Than any Roman did her villainy

'Hath not Lucrece ysland herself, alas!
 At Rome, when that she oppressed was
 Of Tarquin? for her thought it was a shame
 To liven, when she hadde lost her name 11720

'The seven maidens of Milesie also
 Have slain themselves for very dread and woe,
 Rather than folk of Gaul them should oppress

'More than a thousand stories, as I guess,
 Could I now tell as touching this matiere

'When Abiadate was slain, his wife so dear
 Herselven slew, and let her blood to glide
 In Abiadate's woundes, deep and wide,
 And said, "My body at the leaste way
 There shall no wight defoulen, if I may" 11730

'What should I more examples hereof sayn?
 Since that so many have themselven slain
 Well rather than they would defouled be,

I will conclude that it is bet¹ for me

¹ Bétter

To slay myself than be defouled thus

I will be true unto Alynagus,

Or elles slay myself in some mannere,

As did Demotione's daughter dear,

Because she woulde not defouled be

'O Sedasus, it is full great pity 11740

To readen how thy daughters died, alas!
 That slew themselven for such manner cas²

² Chance

'As great a pity was it, or well more,
 The Theban maiden, that for Nicanore

	<p>Heiselveu slew, ight for such manner woo 11745 Another Theban maiden did ight so, For one of Macedon had hei oppress'd, She with hei death hei maidenhead redress'd 'What shall I say of Niceiates' wife, That for such case bereft heiself her life? 11750 'How true was eke to Alcibiades His love, that for to dien rather chees,¹ Than for to suffer his body unburi'd be? 'Lo, which² a wife was Alcest' eke?' quod she 'What saith Homér of good Penelope? All Greece knoweth of hei chastity 'Pardie, of Laodomia is written thus, That when at Troy was slain Protesilaus, No longer would she live after his day 'The same of noble Portia tell I may, 11760 Withouten Brutus coude she not live, To whom she had all whole hei hearte give 'The perfect wifchood of Artemisie Honoured is throughout all Barbaie. 'O Teuta queen, thy wifely chastity To alle wives may a miror be' Thus plained Dorigen a day or tway, Purposing ever that she woulde dey,³ But natheless upon the thirde night Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight, 11770 And asked her why that she wept so sore? And she 'gan weepen ever longer the more 'Alas' quod she, 'that ever I was yboin' 'Thus have I said,' quod she, 'thus have I sworn' And told him all, as ye have heard before It needeth not rehearse it you no more This husband with glad chere,⁴ in frendly wise,</p>	
¹ Chose		
² For 'what'		
³ Die.		
⁴ Deport ment		

Answer'd and said, as I shall you devise 11775

'Is there ought elles, Dorigen, but this''

'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'God help me so, as wis¹
This is too much, and² it were Godde's will'

'Yea, wife,' quod he, 'let sleepen that is still,
It may be well pai'venture yet to-day.

Ye shall your truthe holden, by my fay.

For God so wisely³ have mercy' on me,

I had well lever⁴ sticket for to be,

For very love which that I to you have,

But if ye should your truthe keep and save

Truth is the highest thing that man may keep'

But with that word he buist anon to weep, 11790

And said, 'I you forbid on pain of death,

That never while you lasteth life or breath,

To no wight tell ye this misaventure,

As I may best I will my woe endure,

Nor make no countenance of heaviness,

That folk of you may deemen harm or guess'

And forth he clep'd a squier and a maid.

'Go forth anon with Dorigen,' he said,

'And bringeth hei to such a place anon'

They take then leave, and on their way they gon

But they ne wisten why she thither went, 11801

She n'olde⁵ no wight tellen hei intent

This squier, which that hight Aurehus,

On Dorigen that was so amorous,

Of aventure happen'd hei to meet

Amid the town, right in the quickest⁶ street,

As she was bound to go the way forthright

Toward the garden, there as she had hight⁷

And he was to the gardenward also,

For well he spied when she woulde go 11810

Out of her house, to any manner place.

¹ Assured

² In
³ It

⁴ Certain-
ly

⁵ Rather

⁶ Would
not

⁷ Readiest

⁸ Pro-
mised.

	But thus they met of aventure or grace,	11812
	And he saluteth her with glad intent,	
	And asketh of her whitherward she went	
	And she answered, half as she were mad,	
	‘Unto the garden, as mine husband bade,	
	My truthe for to hold, alas! alas!’	
	Aurelius ‘gan wonder on this case,	
	And in his heart had great compassion	
	Of her, and of her lamentation,	11820
	And of Arvagus, the worthy knight,	
	That bade her holden all that she had hight,	
	So loth him was his wife should break her truth	
	And in his heart he caught of it great ruth,	
	Considering the best on every side,	
¹ Rather	That from his lust yet were him lever ¹ abide,	
	Than do so high a churlish wretchedness	
² Generosity	Against franchise, ² and alle gentleness,	
	For which in fewe wordes said he thus	
	‘Madám, say to your lord Arvagus,	11830
	That since I see the greate gentleness	
	Of him, and eke I see well your distress,	
	That him were lever have shame (and that were ruth)	
	Than ye to me should breaken thus your truth,	
	I had well lever ever to suffer woe,	
³ Divide	Than to depart ³ the love betwixt you two	
	I you release, Madám, into your hond	
⁴ Security	Quit every surement ⁴ and every bond,	
	That ye have made to me, as herebeforn,	
	Since thilke time that ye were yborn	11840
⁵ Reproach	Have here my truth, I shall you never reprieve ⁵	
	Of no behest, and here I take my leave,	
	As of the truest and the beste wife,	
	That ever yet I knew in all my life’	
	But every wife beware of her behest,	

On Dorigen rememb'reth at the lest ¹	11846	¹ Least
Thus can a squier do a gentle deed,		
As well as can a knight, withouten diede ²		² Doubt.
She thanketh him upon her knees bare,		
And home unto her husband is she fare, ³		³ Gone
And told him all, as ye have heard me said.		
And, trusteth me, he was so well apaid, ⁴		⁴ Satisfied.
That it were impossible me to write		
What should I longer of this case indite?		
Aiuragus and Dorigen his wife		
In soveraign blisse ledden forth their life,		
Never eft ⁵ ne was there anger them between,		⁵ After
He cherish'd her as though she were a queen,		
And she was to him true for evermore		
Of these two folk ye get of me no more	11860	
Aurelius, that his cost hath all forlorn, ⁶		⁶ Lost
Causeth the time that ever he was born		
'Alas!' quod he, 'alas that I behight ⁷		⁷ Promised
Of pure gold a thousand pound of weight		
Unto this philosópher! how shall I do?		
I see no more, but that I am fordo ⁸		⁸ Ruined
Mine heritage must I needes sell,		
And be a beggar, here I nill ⁹ not dwell,		⁹ Will not
And shamen all my kindred in this place,		
But ¹⁰ I of him may gotten better glace.	11870	¹⁰ Unless
But natheless I will of him assay		
At certain dayes year by year to pay,		
And thank him of his greate courtesy.		
My truthe will I keep, I will not lie'		
With hearte sore he go'th unto his coffer,		
And broughte gold unto this philosópher,		
The value of five hundred pound I guess,		
And him beseecheth of his gentleness		
To giant him dayes of the remenant,		

	And said, 'Master, I dare well make avaunt, 11880 I failed never of my truth as yet For sikelly ¹ my debte shall be quit Towardes you, how so that e'er I fare To go a begging in my kute bare But would ye vouchen safe upon surety Two year or three for to respiten me, Then were I well, for elles must I sell Mine heritage, there is no more to tell'
¹ Assured-ly	This philosópher soberly answer'd, And sayed thus, when he these wordes heard, 11890 'Have I not holden covenant to thee?'
	'Yes, certes, well and truly,' quod he 'Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liketh?'
² Sigheth	'No, no,' quod he, and sorrowfully he siketh ² 'What was the cause? tell me if thou can'
	Amelius his tale anon began, And told him all as ye have heard befoie, It needeth not rehearse it any more He said, 'Alviragus of gentleness
³ Rather	Had lever ³ die in sorrow and in distress, 11900 Than that his wife were of her truthe false The sorrow of Dougen he told him als, How loth hei was to be a wicked wife, And that she lever had lost that day her life; And that hei truth she swore through innocence,
⁴ Before	She ne'er eist ⁴ had heard speak of apparence That made me have of her so great pity, And right as freely' as he sent her to me, As freely sent I hei to him again This is all and some, there n'is no more to sayn.'
⁵ Dear	The philosópher answer'd, 'Leve ⁵ brother, 11911 Evereach of you did gently to othei. Thou art a squier, and he is a knight,

But God forbide for his blissful might,	11914	
But if a clerk could do a gentle deed		
As well as any of you, it is no drede ¹		¹ Doubt.
'Su, I release thee thy thousand pound,		
As thou ight now were crope ² out of the ground,		² Crept.
Ne never ere now ne haddest knowen me		
Foi, Su, I will not take a penny of thee	11920	*
Foi all my craft, ne nought for my travaille		
Thou hast ypayed well for my vitaille		
It is enough, and farewell, have good day'		
And took his horse, and forth he go'th his way.		
Lordings, this question would I asken now,		
Which was the moste free, ³ as thinketh you?		³ Bounti- ful.
Now telleth me, ere that ye further wend.		
I can no more, my tale is at an end.		

THE DOCTOR'S PROLOGUE.

'YEA, let that passen,' quod our Host, 'as now
 Sir Doctor of Physike, I pray you, 11930
 Tell us a tale of some honest mattére'
 'It shall be done, if that ye will it hear,'
 Said this Doctor, and his tale began anon
 'Now, good men,' quod he, 'heark'neth every one'

THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

THERE was, as telleth Titus Lavius,
 A knight, that cleped was Vnguius,
 Fulfilled of honou and worthiness,
 And strong of friendes, and of great richéss
 This knight a daughter hadde by his wife,
 No children had he more in all his life 11940
 Fair was this maid in excellent beauty
 Aboven every wight that man may see
 For nature hath with sovereign diligence
 Yformed her in so great excellence,
 As though she woulde say, 'Lo, I, Natúie,
 Thus can I form and paint a créature,

When that me list, who can me counterfeit? 11947

Pygmalion? not, though he aye forge and beat,

Or grave, or painte for I daie well sayn,

Apelles, Xeuxis, shoulde work in vain,

Either to grave, or paint, or forge, or beat,

If they presumed me to counterfeit

For he that is the former principal,

Hath maked me his vicar-general

To form and painten earthly creatures

Right as me list, and each thing in my cure¹ is

Under the moone, that may wane and wax

And for my work right nothing will I axe,

My lord and I be full of one accord

I made her to the worship of my lord,

So do I all mine other creatures,

What colour that they have, or what figures'

Thus seemeth me that Nature woulde say

This maid of age twelve year was and tway,

In which that Nature hadde such delight.

For right as she can paint a lily white

And red a rose, right with such painture

She painted hath this noble creature

Ere she was born, upon her limbes free,

Whereas by right such colours shoulde be

And Phoebus dyed hath her tresses great,

Like to the steames of his burned heat

And if that excellent were her beauty,

A thousand-fold more virtuous was she

In her ne lacked no condition,

That is to praise, as by discretion.

As well in ghost² as body, chaste was she.

For which she flow'rd in virginity,

With all humility and abstinence,

With all attemperance and patience,

¹ Care

11960

11970

² Mind.

11980

For evermore therefore for Christe's sake	12015	
To teach them virtue look that ye ne slake.		
A thief of venison, that hath forlaft ¹		¹ For-
His likerousness, ² and all his olde craft,		fallen
Can keep a forest best of any man		² Gluttony
Now keep'th them well, for if ye will ye can	12020	
Look well, that ye unto no vice assent,		
Lest ye be damned for your wick' ³ intent,		³ Wicked
For whoso doth, a traitor is certain		
And taketh keep of that I shall you sayn,		
Of alle treason sovereign pestilence		
Is, when a wight betrayeth innocence		
Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke also,		
Though ye have children, be it one or mo,		
Yours is the charge of all their suveance, ⁴		⁴ Over-
While that they be under your governance	12030	sight.
Beware, that by example of your living,		
Or by your negligence in chastising,		
That they ne perish for I dare well say,		
If that they do, ye shall it dear abeye ⁵		⁵ Pay for
Under a shepheid soft and negligent,		
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent		
Sufficeth this example now as here,		
For I must turn again to my mattére		
This maid, of which I tell my tale express,		
She kept herself, her needed no mistréss,	12040	
For in her living, maidens mighten read,		
As in a book, every good word and deed,		
That longeth to a maiden virtuous		
She was so prudent and so bounteous		
For which the fame out sprung on every side		
Both of her beauty and her bounty ⁶ wide		⁶ Good-
That through the land they praised her each one,		ness.
That loved virtue, save envy alone,		

¹ Misfortune	<p>That souny is of other manne's weal, 12049 And glad is of his sorrow and his unhele¹ The Doctor maketh this descriptioun</p>
² Observing ³ Where	<p>This maiden on a day went in the town Toward a temple, with her mother dear, As is of younge maidens the mannée Now was there then a justice in that town, That governor was of that regioun. And so befell, this judge his eyen cast Upon this maid, avising² her full fast, As she came forth by there³ this judge stood 12060 Anon his hearte changed and his mood, So was he caught with beauty of this maid, And to himself full privily he said, 'This maiden shall be mine for any man'</p>
⁴ Goodness	<p>Anon the fiend into his hearte ran, And taught him suddenly, that he by sleight This maiden to his purpose winnen might. For certes, by no force, nor by no meed, Him thought he was not able for to speed, For she was strong of friendes, and eke she Confirmed was in such sovereign bounty,⁴ 12070 That well he wist he might her never win, As for to make her with her body sin. For which with great deliberatioun He sent after a churl was in the town, The which he knew for subtle and for bold This judge unto this churl his tale hath told In secret wise, and made him to insure, He shoulde tell it to no creature,</p>
⁵ Head ⁶ Counsel	<p>And if he did, he shoulde lose his hede⁵ And when assented was this cursed rede,⁶ 12080 Glad was the judge, and maked him great cheer, And gave him giftes precious and dear.</p>

When shapen was all their conspniacy 12083
 From point to point, how that his lechery
 Performed shoulde be full subtly,
 As ye shall hear it after openly,
 Home go'th this chuil, that highte Claudius
 This false judge, that highte Appius,
 (So was his name, for it is no fable,
 But known for an historial thing notable, 12090
 The sentence of it sooth is out of doubt,)
 This false judge go'th now fast about
 To hasten his delight all that he may.
 And so befell, soon after on a day
 This false judge, as telleth us the story,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistory,
 And gave his doomes upon sundry case;
 This false chuil came forth a full great pace,
 And saide, 'Lord, if that it be your will,
 As do me right upon this piteous bill, 12100
 In which I 'plain upon Vugnius
 And if that he will say it is not thus,
 I will it prove, and finden good witness,
 That sooth is that my bille will express'
 The judge answer'd, 'Of this in his absénce
 I may not give definitive sentence
 Let do¹ him call, and I will gladly hear,
 Thou shalt have right, and no wrong as now here.'
 Virginius came to weet² the judge's will,
 And right anon was read this cursed bill, 12110
 The sentence of it was as ye shall hear
 'To you, my lord, Sir Appius so dear,
 Sheweth your poore servant Claudius,
 How that a knight called Virginius,
 Against the law, against all equity,
 Holdeth, express against the will of me,

¹ Cause² Know

My servant, which that is my thral by ȝight, 12117
 Which from mine house was stolen on a ȝight
 While that she was full young, I will it pieve
 By witness, lord, so that it you not grieve,
 She n'is his daughter nought, whatso he say
 Wherefore to you, my lord the judge, I pray,
 Yield me my thral, if that it be you will.
 Lo, this was all the sentence of his bill

Virginus 'gan upon the churl behold,
 But hastily, ere he his tale told,
 And would have proved it, as should a knight,
 And eke by witnessing of many a wight,
 That all was false, that said his adversary,
 This cursed judge woulde nothing tary, 12130
 Nor hear a word more of Virginus,
 But gave his judgement, and saide thus

¹ Pro
 nounce

'I deem¹ anon this churl his servant have,
 Thou shalt no longer in thine house her save
 Go, bring her forth, and put her in our ward,
 The churl shall have his thral, thus I awaid'

And when this worthy knight Virginus,
 Through sentence of this justice Appius,
 Muste by force his deare daughter given
 Unto the judge, in lechery to liven, 12140
 He go'th him home, and set him in his hall,
 And let anon his deare daughter call
 And with a face dead as ashes cold,

*
² Al-
 though

Upon her humble face he 'gan behold,
 With father's pity sticking through his heart,
 All² would he from his purpose not convert
 'Daughter,' quod he, 'Virginia by thy name,
 There be two wayes, either death or shame,
 That thou must suffer, alas that I was bore!
 For never thou deservedest wherefore 12150

To dien with a sword or with a knife 12151
 O deare daughter, ender of my life,
 Which I have foster'd up with such plea-ance
 That thou were ne'er out of my remembrance;
 O daughter, which that art my laste woe,
 And in my life my laste joy also,
 O gem of chastity, in patience
 Take thou thy death, for this is my sentence,
 For love and not for hate thou must be dead,
 My piteous hand must smiten off thine head 12160
 Alas that ever Appius thee say'¹ 12151
 Thus hath he falsely judgcd thee to-day'
 And told her all the case, as ye before
 Have heard, it needeth not to tell it more
 'O mercy, deare father,' quod this maid
 And with that word she both her aimes laid
 About his neck, as she was wont to do,
 (The teares burst out of her eyen two,)
 And said, 'O goode father, shall I die?
 Is there no giace? is there no remedy?' 12170
 'No cotes, deare daughter mine,' quod he
 'Then give me leasure, father mine,' quod she,
 My death for to complain a little space
 For, pddie,² Jephthah gave his daughter
 giace
 For to complain, ere he her slow, alas!
 And God it wot, nothing was her trespass,
 But for she ran her father first to see,
 To welcome him with great solemnity'
 And with that word she fell aswoon anon,
 And after, when her swooning was agone, 12180
 She riseth up, and to her father said
 'Blessed be God, that I shall die a maid
 Give me my death, ere that I have a shame,

	Do with youn child youn will, a' Godde's name'	
	And with that word she prayed him full oft,	12185
	That with his sward he woulde smite hei soft,	
	And with that word, aswoon again she fell	
	Hei father, with full sorrowful heart and will,	
¹ Took	Hei head off smote, and by the top it hent, ¹	
	And to the judge he 'gan it to present,	12190
² Judg- ment	As he sat yet in doom ² in consistoiy	
	And when the judge it saw, as saith the story,	
³ Hang up	He bade to take him, and anhang ³ him fast	
⁴ Thrust	But right anon a thousand people in thraist ⁴	
	To save the knight, for ruth and for pity,	
	For knowen was the false iniquity	
	The people anon had suspéct in this thing	
	By manner of the chauce's challenging,	
	That it was by the assent of Appius,	
	They wisten well that he was lecherous	12200
	For which unto this Appius they gon,	
	And cast him in a prison right anon,	
	Whereas he slew himself and Claudius,	
	That servant was unto this Appius,	
	Was doomed for to hang upon a tree,	
	But that Virginus of his pity	
	So prayed for him, that he was exiled,	
	And elles certes had he been beguiled	
	The remnant were anhangd, more and less,	
	That were consentant of this cursedness	12210
	Here men may see how sin hath his merit	
	Beware, for no man wot whom God will smite	
	In no degree, nor in which manner wise	
⁵ Cause to tremble	The worm of conscience may agaise ⁵	
	Of wicked life, though it so privy be,	

That no man wot thereof, save God and he
For be he lewed¹ man or elles lea'd,²
He n'ot³ how soon that he shall be afeard,
Therefor I rede⁴ you this counsel take,
Forsaketh sin, ere sinne you forsake.

12216

¹ Ignorant² Learned³ Knows

not

⁴ Advise

THE PARDONER'S PROLOGUE.

¹ Mad	OUR Hoste 'gan to swear as he were wood, ¹	12221
	' Harrow! (quod he) by nailes and by blood,	
	This was a false churl, and a false justice	
	As shameful death, as herte can devise,	
² Counsel	Come to these judges and then advocas ²	
lois	Algate ³ this sely ⁴ maid is slain, alas!	
³ Never-	Alas! too dear! abought she hei beauty	
theless	Wherefore I say, that all day man may see,	
⁴ Innocent	That giftes of fortune and of nature	
	Be cause of death to many a creature	12230
	Hei beauty was hei death, I dare well sayn,	
	Alas! so piteously as she was slain	
	Of bothe giftes, that I speak of now,	
⁵ Profit	Men have full often more for harm than prow ⁵	
	' But truly, mine owen master dear,	
	This was a piteous tale for to hear	
⁶ No mat-	But natheless, pass over, is no force ⁶	
ter	I pray to God to save thy gentle coise,	
	And eke thine unimals, and thy jordans,	
	Thine Hippocras, and eke thy Galens,	12240
⁷ Boi	And every boist ⁷ full of thy 'lectuary,	
	God bless them and our lady Sante Mary	
⁸ Thi ve	So may I the, ⁸ thou art a proper man,	

And like a prelate, by Saint Roman,	12244	
Said I not well? I cannot speak in term, ¹		¹ By rule
But well I wot, thou dost ² mine heart to erme, ³		² Makest Grieve
That I have almost caught a cardiake ⁴		⁴ Heart- ache
By <i>corpus Domini</i> but ⁵ I have triacle, ⁶		⁵ Unless ⁶ A reme- dy
Or else a draught of moist ⁷ and comy ale,	12250	No
Or but I hear anon a merry tale,		
Mine heart is lost for pity of this maid		
Thou <i>bel amy</i> , thou Pardoner, he said,		
'Tell us some mirth of japes ⁸ right anon'		⁸ Joke-
'It shall be done,' quod he, 'by Saint Romon		
But first (quod he) here at this ale-stake ⁹		⁹ An ale house sign
I will both drink, and biten on a cake'		
But right anon these gentles 'gan to cry,		
'Nay, let him tell us of no ribaldry		
Tell us some moral thing, that we may leie ¹⁰		¹⁰ Learn
Some wit, and thenne will we gladly hear'	12260	
'I giant ywis,' ¹¹ quod he, 'but I must think		¹¹ Certain- ly
Upon some honest thing, while that I drink.'		

THE PARDONERS TALE

LORDINGS, (quod he,) in churche when I preach,		
I pame me to have an hautein ¹² speech,		¹² Lofty
And ring it out, as round as go'th a bell,		
For I can ¹³ all by rote that I tell		¹³ Know
My theme is alway one, and ever was,		
<i>Radix malorum est cupiditas</i>		
First I pronounce whennes that I come,		
And then my bulles shew I all and some	12270	
Our hege loide's seal on my patent,		
That shew I first my body to warrant,		

	That no man be so bold, ne priest nor clerk,	12273
	Me to disturb of Churche's holy werk	
	And after that then tell I forth my tales.	
	Bulles of popes, and of cardinales,	
	Of patriarchs, and bishopes I shew,	
	And in Latin I speak a wordes few,	
¹ Coloure	To saffron ¹ with my predicacioun,	
	And for to stur men to devotioun	12280
	Then shew I forth my longe crystal stones,	
	Ycrammed full of cloutes and of bones,	
² Think	Relics they be, as weenen ² they each one	
³ Brass	Then have I in laton ³ a shoulde-bone,	
	Which that was of an holy Jewe's sheep	
⁴ Care	'Good men,' say I, 'take of my wordes keep ⁴	
	If that this bone be wash'd in any well,	
	If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxen swell,	
	That any worm hath eat, or worm ystung,	
	Take water of that well, and wash his tongue,	12290
	And it is whole anon and furthermore	
	Of pockes, and of scab, and every sore	
	Shall every sheep be whole, that of this well	
	Drinketh a draught, take keep of that I tell	
⁵ Owneth	'If that the good man, that the beastes oweth, ⁵	
	Will every week, ere that the cock him croweth,	
	Fasting ydrunken of this well a draught,	
	As thilke holy Jew our elders taught,	
	His beastes and his store shall multiply	
	And, Sirs, also it healeth jealousy,	12300
	For though a man be fall in jealous rage,	
	Let maken with this water his potage,	
	And never shall he more his wife mistrust,	
	Though he the sooth of her defaulte wist,	
	All ⁶ had she taken priestes two or thre	
⁶ Al-though ⁷ Glove	'Here is a mittan ⁷ eke, that ye may see	

He that his hand will put in this mittain,	12307	
He shall have multiplying of his gream,		
When he hath sowed, be it wheat or oats,		
So that he offer pence or elles greats		
‘And, men and women, one thing warn I you		
If any wight be in this chunche now,		
That hath done sin horrible, so that he		
Dare not for shame of it yshiven ¹ be		¹ Confess ed
Or any woman, be she young or old,		
That hath ymade her husband cokewold,		
Such folk shall have no power nor no grace		
To offer to my relics in this place		
And whoso findeth him out of such blame,		
He will come up and offer in Godde’s name,	12320	
And I assolt him by the authority,		
Which that by bull ygianted was to me’		
By this gaud ² have I wonnen year by year		² Jest
An hundred mark, since I was pardoneie		
I stande like a clerk in my pulpit,		
And when the lewed ³ people is down yset,		³ Ignorant
I preache so as ye have heard before,		
And tell an hundred false japes ⁴ moie		⁴ Tricks
Then pain I me to stretchen forth my neck,		
And east and west upon the people I beck,	12330	
As doth a dove, sitting upon a bein ⁵		⁵ Barn
My handes and my tongue go so yein, ⁶		⁶ Briskly
That it is joy to see my business		
Of avarice and of such cusedness		
Is all my preaching, for to make them free		
To give their pence, and namely unto me		
For mine intent is not but for to win,		
And nothing for correctiön of sin		
I recke never when that they be buried,		
Though that their soules go a blacke buried	12340	

Then tell I them examples many one
Of olde stoures longe time agone 12370
For lewed² people loven tales old,
Such thinges can they well report and hold
What² trowen ye, that whiles I may preach
And winnen gold and silver for I teach,

That I will live in povert' wilfully? 12375

Nay, nay, I thought it never truely.

For I will preach and beg in sundry lands,

I will not do no labour with mine hands,

Nor make baskettes for to live thereby,

Because I will not beggen idly 12380

I will none of the apostles counterfeit

I will have money, wolfe, cheese, and wheat,

All¹ were it given of the poorest page, ¹ Al-though

Or of the poorest widow in a village

All should her children starven for famine

Nay, I will drink the liquor of the vine,

And have a jolly wench in every town

But heark'neth, lordings, in conclusioun,

Your liking is that I shall tell a tale

Now I have drunk a draught of corny ale, 12390

By God, I hope I shall you tell a thing,

That shall by reason be at your liking

For though myself be a full vicious man,

A moral tale yet I you tellen can,

Which I am wont to preachen, for to win

Now hold your peace, my tale I will begin.

In Flanders whilom was a company

Of younge folk, that haunteden folly,

As hazard, not, stewes, and tavéins;

Whereas with harpes, lutes, and gittéins,² 12400 ² Guitars.

They dance and play at dice both day and night,

And eat also, and dunke o'er then might,

Through which they do the devil sacrifice

Within the devil's temple, in cursed wise,

By superfluity abominable

Then oathes been so great and so damnable,

That it is grisly³ for to hear them swear ³ Dreadful

	<p>Our blissful Loide's body they to-tear, 12408 Them thought the Jowes rent him not enough, And each of them at othei's sinne lough And ight anon in comen tombestores¹ Fetis² and small, and younge frutestores,³ Singers with haipes, baudes,⁴ wafours,⁵ Which be the very devil's officers, To kindle and blow the fire of lechery, That is annexed unto gluttony The holy writ take I to my witness, That luxury is in wine and drunkenness Lo, how that drunken Lot unkindely⁶ Lay by his daughters two unwittingly, 12420 So drunk he was he n'iste what he wrought Herodes, who so well the stones sought, When he of wine replete was at his feast, Right at his owen table he gave his hest⁷ To slay the Baptist John full guileless Seneca saith a good word doubteless He saith he can no difference find Betwixt a man that is out of his mind, And a man whiche that is drunkelew⁸ But that woodness,⁹ yfallen in a shrow,¹⁰ 12430 Persevéieth longer than doth drunkenness O gluttonie, full of cursedness, O cause first of our confusión, O original of our damnation, Till Christ had bought us with his blood again Looketh, how deare, shortly for to sayn, Abought¹¹ was thilke cursed villany Corrupt was all this world for gluttony Adam our fater, and his wife also, From Paradise, to labour and to woe, 12440 Were driven for that vice, it is no diede¹²</p>
¹ Female dancers	
² Neat	
³ Female fruit sellers	
⁴ Joyous	
⁵ Selleis of wafel-cakes	
⁶ Unnatually	
⁷ Command	
⁸ Drunken	
⁹ Madness	
¹⁰ One evil tempered	
¹¹ Purchased	
¹² Doubt	

For while that Adam fasted, as I read, 12442
 He was in Paradise, and when that he
 Ate of the fruit defended,¹ on a tree,
 Anon he was out-cast to woe and pain
 O gluttony! on thee well ought us plain

¹ Forbid-
den.

Oh! wist a man how many maladies
 Follow of excesse and of gluttonies,
 He woulde be the more measurable
 Of his diete, sitting at his table 12450

Alas! the shorte throat, the tender mouth,
 Maketh that east and west, and north and south,
 In earth, in air, in water, men to-swink,²
 To get a glutton dainty meat and drink
 Of this matter, O Paul! well canst thou treat
 Meat unto womb, and womb eke unto meat,
 Shall God destroyen both, as Paulus saith
 Alas! a foul thing is it by my faith
 To say this word, and fouler is the deed,
 When man so drinketh of the white and rede 12460
 That of his throat he maketh his privy
 Through thilke cursed superfluity

² Labour

The Apostle saith, weeping full piteously,
 There walken many', of which you told have I,
 I say it now weeping with piteous voice,
 That they be enemies of Christe's crois
 Of which the end is death, womb is then God
 O womb, O belly, stinking is thy cod,³
 Fulfill'd of dung and of corruptioun,
 At either end of thee foul is the soun' 12470

³ A bag

How great labour and cost is thee to find!⁴
 These cookes how they stamp, and strain, and grind,
 And turnen substance into accident,
 To fulfil all thy likerous talent!
 Out of the harde bones knocken they

⁴ To sup-
ply

<p>¹ Sweet</p>	<p>The manow, for they casten nought away, 12476 That may go through the gullet soft and sote ¹ Of spiccey, of leaf, of bark, and root, Shall be his sauce ymaked by delight To make him yet a newei appetite But certes he, that haunteth such delices, Is dead, while that he liveth in those vices A lecherous thing is wine, and diunkenness Is full of striving and of wretchedness O drunken man! disfigured is thy face, Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace And through thy drunken nose seemeth the soun', As though thou saidest aye, Samsoun! Samsoun! And yet, God wot, Samson drank ne'er no wine Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swine 12490</p>
<p>² Care</p>	<p>Thy tongue is lost, and all thine honest cure, ² For diunkenness is very sépulture Of manne's wit, and his discretión In whom that drink hath dominatión, He can no counsel keep, it is no dread ³ Now keep you from the white and from the red, And namely from the white wine of Lepe, That is to sell in Fish-street and in Cheap This wine of Spaine recepeth subtly In othei wines growing faste by, 12500</p>
<p>³ Doubt</p>	<p>Of which there useth such fumosity, ⁴ That when a man hath drunken draughtes thice, And weeneth that he be at home in Cheap, He is in Spain, right at the town of Lepe, Not at the Róchelle, nor at Boudeaux town, And thenne will he say, Samsoun! Samsoun!</p>
<p>⁴ Fumes</p>	<p>But heark'neth, lordings, one word, I you pray, That all the sovereign actes, dare I say, Of victories in the Olde Testament,</p>

Through very God, that is omnipotent,	12510	
We're done in abstinence and in prayere		
Looketh the Bible, and there ye may it leie ¹		¹ Learn
Look, Attila, the grete conqueror,		
Died in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,		
Bleeding aye at his nose in drunkenness		
A capitain should live in soberness		
And o'er all this, aviseth ² you right well,		² Consider
What was commanded unto Lemuel,		
Not Samuel, but Lemuel say I		
Readeth the Bible, and find it expressly	12520	
Of wine giving to them that have justice		
No more of this, for it may well suffice		
And now that I have spoke of gluttony,		
Now will I you defenden ³ hazardry ⁴		³ Forbid
Hazard is very mother of leasings, ⁵		⁴ Gaming
And of deceit, and cursed forswearings		⁵ Lies
Blaspheming of Christ, manslaughter, and waste also		
Of chattel, ⁶ and of time, and furthermo		⁶ Property
It is reprieve, ⁷ and contrary of honour,		⁷ Reproach
For to be held a common hazardour	12530	
And ever the higher he is of estate,		
The more he is holden desolate		
If that a pynce useth hazardry,		
In alle governance and policy		
He is, as by common opinion,		
Yhold the less in reputation		
Stilbon, that was a wise ambassador,		
Was sent to Courth with full great honour		
From Calidon, to maken them alliance		
And when he came, it happen'd him <i>par chance</i> ,		
That all the greatest that were of that lond	12541	
Yplaying atte hazard he them fond		
For which, as soon as that it mighte be,		

Than homicide, or many another thing	12578	
I say that as by orde ¹ thus it standeth,		
This knoweth he that his hests understandeth,		
How that the second hest of God is that		
And furthermore, I will thee tell all plat, ¹		¹ Plainly
That vengeance shall not parten from his house,		
That of his oathes is outrageous		
'By Godde's precious heart, and by his nails,		
And by the blood of Christ, that is in Hailes,		
Seven is my chance, and thine is cinque and tye		
By Godde's aimes, if thou falsely play,		
This dagger shall throughout thine heart go'		
This fruit com'th of the bicchel bones two,	12590	
Forswearing, ne, falseness, and homicide		
Now for the love of Christ that for us died,		
Leteth ² your oathes, bothe great and smale		² Leave
But, Sns, now will I tell you forth my tale.		
These notoures three, of which I tell,		
Long eist ³ ere pime rung of any bell,		³ Before
Were set them in a tavern for to drink		
And as they sat, they heard a belle clink		
Before a corpse, was carried to his grave		
That one of them 'gan callen to his knave, ⁴	12600	⁴ Servant
'Go bet,' ⁵ quod he, 'and aske readily,		⁵ A hunting phrase
What corpse is this, that passeth here forth by:		
And look that thou report his name well.'		
'Sn,' quod this boy, 'it needeth never a del, ⁶		⁶ Whitt.
It was me told ere ye came here two hous,		
He was pardie an old fellow of yours,		
And suddenly he was yslain to-night,		
Fordrunk as he sat on his bench upright,		
There came a privy thief, men clepen ⁷ Death,		⁷ Call
That in this country all the people slay'th,	12610	
And with his speal he smote his heart atwo,		

	And went his way withouten wordes mo	12612
	He hath a thousand slam this pestilence	
	And, master, ere you come in his presence,	
	Methinketh that it were full necessary,	
	For to beware of such an adversary.	
	Be ready for to meet him evermore	
	Thus taughte me my dame, I say no more'	
	'By Sante Mary,' said this taveinere,	
	'The child saith sooth, for he hath slam this year	
	Hence over a mile, within a great village,	12621
	Both man and woman, child, and hnd, and page,	
	I trow his habitacioun be there	
¹ Watchful	To be avised ¹ great wisdom it were,	
	Ere that he did a man a dishonour'	
	'Yea, Godde's aimes,' quod this notoun,	
	'Is it such peril with him for to meet'	
	I shall him seek by stile and oke by street	
² Worthy	I make a vow by Godde's digne ² bones	
³ At one	Heak'noth, fellows, we thre be alle ones ³	12630
	Let each of us hold up his hand to othei,	
	And each of us becomen othei's brother,	
	And we will slay this false traitor Death	
	He shall be slam, he that so many slay th,	
	By Godde's dignity, ere it be night'	
	Together have these thre then truthe plight	
	To live and dien each of them for othei,	
	As though he were his owen boien brother	
	And up they start all drunken in this rage,	
	And forth they go towarde that village,	12640
	Of which the taveiner had spoke befor,	
⁴ Dreadful	And many a gisly ⁴ oath then have they sworn,	
	And Churche's blessed body they to-rent,	
⁵ Catch	'Death shall be dead, if that we may him hent' ⁵	
	When they have gone not fully half a mile,	

Right as they would have trodden over a stile,
An old man and a poore with them met.

12647

This olde man full meekely them greet,¹

¹ Greeting

And saide thus, 'Now, lordes, God you see'²

- Pictorial

The proudest of these notoures three

Answer'd again, 'What? churl, with sorry grace,

Why art thou all forwrapped save thy face?

Why livest thou so long in so great age?"

This olde man 'gan look in his visage,

And saide thus, 'For I ne cannot find

A man, though that I walked into Ind,

Neither in city, nor in no village,

That woulde change his youthe for mine age,

And therefore must I have mine age still

As longe time as it is Godde's will

12660

Ne Death, alas! ne will not have my life

Thus walk I like a resteless cartiff,

And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,

I knocke with my staff, early and late,

And say to hei, "Leve³ mother, let me in

³ Dear

Lo, how I vamsh, flesh, and blood, and skin,

Alas! when shall my bones be at rest?

Mother, with you would I changen my chest,

That in my chamber longe time hath be,

Yea, for an hany clout to wrap in me"

12670

But yet to me she will not do that grace,

For which full pale and welked⁴ is my face.

⁴ Withered

'But, Sns, to you it is no courtesy

To speak unto an old man villany,

But⁵ he trespass in word or else in deed.

⁵ Except

In holy writ ye may yourselfen read,

"Against⁶ an old man, hoar upon his head,

⁶ To meet

Ye should aise" therefore I give you rede,⁷

⁷ Advice

Ne do unto an old man no harm now,

	<p>No more than that ye would a man did you 12680 In age, if that ye may so long abide And God be with you, where ye go or ride I must go thither as I have to go' 'Nay, olde chunl, by God thou shalt not so,' Saide this othei hazardou anon, 'Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John Thou spake ight now of thulke traitor Death, That in this country all oue friendes slay'th, Have here my truth, as thou art his espy; ¹ Suffer for Tell where he is, or thou shalt it aby,¹ 12690 By God and by the holy sacrament, For soothly thou art one of his assent To slay us younge folk, thou false thief' ² Pleasant 'Now, Sirs,' quod he, 'if it be you so hef² To finden Death, turn up this crooked way, For in that grove I left him, by my fay, Under a tree, and there he will abide, Nor for your boast he will him nothing hide See ye that oak? right there ye shall him find God save you, that bought again mankind, 12700 And you amend!' thus said this olde man.</p> <p>And evereach of these riotoues ran, Till they came to the tree, and there they found Of florens fine of gold ycomed round, Well nigh an eghte bushels, as them thought. No longer as then after Death they sought, But each of them so glad was of the sight, For that the florens been so far and bright, That down they set them by the precious hoard. The worst of them he spake the firste word 12710 'Brethren,' quod he, 'take keep what I shall say, ³ Joke, My wit is great, though that I bound³ and play. This treasure hath fortune unto us given</p>
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In muth and jollity our life to liven,	12714	
And lightly as it com'th, so will we spend		
Hey! Godde's precious dignity! who wend ¹		¹ Thought
To-day, that we should have so fan a grace?		
But might this gold be carried from this place		
Home to mine house, or elles unto yours,		
(For well I wot that all this gold is ours,)	12720	
Thenne were we in high felicity		
But truly by day it may not be,		
Men woulden say that we were thieves strong,		
And for our owen treasure do ² us hong		² Cause
This treasure must yearned be by night		
As wisely and as shily as it might		
Wherefore I rede, ³ that cut ⁴ among us all		³ Advise ⁴ Lot
We draw, and let see where the cut will fall.		
And he that hath the cut, with hearte blith,		
Shall runnen to the town, and that full swith, ⁵	12730	⁵ Quickly
And bring us bread and wine full privly		
And two of us shall keepen subtly		
This treasure well and if he will not tarmen,		
When it is night, we will this treasure carien		
By one assent, where as us thinketh best'		
That one of them the cut brought in his fist,		
And bade them draw and look where it would fall,		
And it fell on the youngest of them all		
And forth toward the town he went anon.		
And all so soon as that he was agone,	12740	
That one of them spake thus unto that other;		
'Thou wottest well thou art my sworn brother,		
Thy profit will I tell thee right anon		
Thou wost ⁶ well that our fellow is agone,		⁶ Knowest.
And here is gold, and that full great plenty,		
That shall departed be among us three		
But natheless, if I can shape it so,		

¹ Know
not

That it departed were among us two, 12748
Had I not done a friende's turn to thee?

That other answer'd, 'I n'ot¹ how that may be
He wot well that the gold is with us tway
What shall we do? what shall we to him say?

'Shall it be counsel?' said the firste shrew,
'And I shall tellen thee in wordes few
What we shall do, and bring it well about'

'I gigante,' quod that other, 'out of doubt,
That by my truth I will thee not bewray'

'Now,' quod the first, 'thou wost well we be tway,
And tway of us shall stronger be than one

Look, when that he is set, thou ight anon 12760

Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play,
And I shall rive him through the sides tway,
While that thou strugglest with him as in game,

And with thy dagger look thou do the same,
And then shall all this gold departed be,

My deare friend, betwixen thee and me

Then may we both our lustes all fulfil,
And play at dice ight at our owen will'

And thus accorded been these shrewes tway,
To slay the thud. as ye have heard me say 12770

This youngest, which that wente to the town,
Full oft in heart he rolleth up and down

The beauty of these floins new and bight
'O Lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I might

Have all this treasure to myself alone,
There n'is no man that liveth under throne

Of God, that shoulde live so meriy as I'

And at the last the fiend our enemy
Put in his thought, that he should poison buy,

With which he mighte slay his fellows tway 12780

For why, the fiend found him in such living,

That he had leave to sorrow him to bring	12782	
For this was utterly his full intent		
To slay them both, and never to repent		
And forth he go'th, no longer would he tarry,		
Into the town unto a 'pothecary,		
And prayed him that he him would sell		
Some poison, that he might his rattons ¹ quell,		¹ Rats
And eke there was a polecat in his haw; ²		² Farm- yard
That, as he said, his capons had yslaw ³	12790	³ Killed
And fain he would him wreaken, ⁴ if he might,		⁴ Revenge
Of vermin, that destroyed them by night		
The 'pothecary answer'd, 'Thou shalt have		
A thing, as wisly ⁵ God my soule save,		⁵ Surely
In all this world there n's no creature,		
That cat or drank hath of this cōfecture,		
Not but the mountance ⁶ of a corn of wheat,		⁶ Amount
That he ne shall his life anon foilete, ⁷		⁷ Give up
Yea, steve ⁸ he shall, and that in lesse while,		⁸ Die
Than thou wilt go a pace not but a mile	12800	
This poison is so strong and violent'		
This cursed man hath in his hand yhent ⁹		⁹ Taken
This poison in a box, and swith ¹⁰ he ran		¹⁰ Quickly
Into the nexte street unto a man,		
And borrow'd of him large bottles three,		
And in the two the poison poued he,		
The thrid he kepte cleane for his drink,		
For all the night he shope ¹¹ him for to swink ¹²		¹¹ Purpos- ed
In carrying off the gold out of that place		¹² Labour
And when this note, with sorry grace,	12810	
Hath fill'd with wine his greate bottles three,		
To his fellows again repaireth he		
What needeth it thereof to sermon more?		
For right as they had cast his death before,		
Right so they have him slain, and that anon		

	And when that this was done, thus spake that one, 'Now let us sit and drink, and make us mery, And after ward we will his body buy' 12818
¹ By chance	And with that word it happen'd him <i>par cas</i> , ¹
² Where	To take the bottle there ² the poison was, And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,
³ Died	For which anon they storven ³ bothe two But certes I suppose that Avicenne Wiote never in no canon, nor in no fenne,* Moie wonder signes of empoisoning, Than had these wretches two ere their ending Thus ended been these homicides two, And eke the false empoisoner also O cusedness of alle cusedness! O traitors homicide! O wickedness! 12830 O glutt'ny, luxury, and hazaidry! Thou blasphemer of Christ with villany, And oathes great, of usage and of pride! Alas! mankinde, how may it betide, That to thy Creatór, which that thee wrought, And with his precious hearte-blood thee bought, Thou art so false and so unkind, ⁴ alas!
⁴ Unnatu- ral	Now, good men, God forgive you your trespass, And wae you from the sin of avaunce
⁵ Cure	Mine holy pardon may you all wance ⁵ 12840
⁶ Pence stealing	So that ye offer nobles or sterlings, ⁶ Or elles silver brooches, spoones, rings Boweth your head under this holy Bull Come up, ye wives, and off'reth of your will, Your names I enter here in my roll anon, Into the bliss of heaven shall ye gon
⁷ Absolve	I you assoile ⁷ by mine high powér,
	* 'Fenne' The name of the sections of Avicenna's great work entitled 'Canon'

You that will offer, as clean and eke as clear 12848
 As ye were born Lo, Snes, thus I preach,
 And Jesus Christ, that is our soules' leach,
 So giante you his pardon to receive,
 For that is best, I will you not deceive

But, Sns, one word forgot I in my tale;
 I have relics and pardon in my mail,
 As fair as any man in Engleland,
 Which were me given by the Pope's hand
 If any of you will of devoti6n
 Offer, and have mine absoluti6n,
 Come forth anon, and kneeleth here adown,
 And meekely receiveth my pardon 12860
 Or elles taketh pardon, as ye wend,¹

¹ Go

All new and fresh at every towne's end,
 So that ye offer alway new and new,
 Nobles or pence, which that be good and true
 It is an honour to evereach that is here,
 That ye may have a suffisant pardonere
 T' assoulen you in country as ye ride,
 For aventures, which that may betide
 Paraventure there may fall one or two,
 Down of his horse, and break his neck atwo 12870

² What

Look, which² a surety is it to you all,
 That I am in your fellowship yfall,
 That may assol you bothe more and lass,³
 When that the soul shall from the body pass
 I rede⁴ that our Hoste shall begin,

³ Less.

⁴ Advise.

For he is most enveloped in sin
 Come forth, Sir Host, and offer first anon,
 And thou shalt kiss the relics every one,
 Yea for a groat, unbuckle anon thy purse

'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'then have I Churste's curse
 Let be,' quod he, 'it shall not be, so the ich⁵ 12881

⁵ So may I thrive

¹ Found

Thou wouldest make me kiss thine olde breech,
 And swear it were a relic of a saint, 12883
 Though it were with thy fundament depaint
 But by the cross, which that Saint Helen fond,¹
 I would I had thine colons in mine hond,
 Instead of relics, or of sanctuary
 Let cut them off, I will thee help them carry,
 They shall be shined in an hogge's toid.'

This Pardoner answered not a word, 12890
 So wioth he was, no word ne would he say
 'Now,' quod our Host, 'I will no longer play
 With thee, nor with none other angry man'

² Nearer

But right anon the worthy Knight began,
 (When that he saw that all the people lough,)
 'No more of this, for it is right enough
 Sir Pardoner, be merry and glad of cheer,
 And ye, Sir Host, that be to me so dear,
 I pray you that ye kiss the Pardoner,
 And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee nei,² 12900
 And as we diden, let us laugh and play.'
 Anon they kiss'd, and inden forth then way.

THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

OUR Host upon his sturups stood anon, 12903

And saide, 'Good men, heark'neth every one,

This was a thurfty tale for the nones

Sn Parish Priest,' quod he, 'for Godde's bones,

Tell us a tale, as was thy forwoid¹ yore

¹ Promise

I see well that ye leained men in loie

Can muchel good, by Godde's dignity'

The Paison him answeí'd, '*Benedicite*' 12910

What aileth the man, so sinfully to sweai'?

Our Host answeí'd, 'O Jankin, be ye there?

Now, good men,' quod our Host, 'heark'neth to me

I smell a lollei² in the wind,' quod he

² Lollard

'Abideth for Godde's digne³ passión,

³ Worthy

For we shall have a predicatiún

This lollei here will preachen us somewhat'

'Nay, by my fater's soul, that shall he nat,

Saide the Shipman, 'here shall he not preach,

He shall no gospel glosen⁴ here nor teach

12920

⁴ Comment

We 'heven all in the great God,' quod he.

'He woulde sowen some difficulty,

Or springen cockle in our cleane corn

And therefore, Host, I warne thee beform,

My jolly body shall a tale tell,

¹ Stomach

And I shall clnken you so mery a bell,
 That I shall waken all this company
 But it shall not be of philosophy,
 Nor of physíc, noi termes quant of law;
 There is but litle Latin in my maw ¹

12926

THE SHIPMAN'S TALE

² Sociable

A MERCHANT whilom dwell'd at Saint Deníse,
 That iche was, for which men held him wise.
 A wife he had of excellent beauty,
 And compaignable,² and ievellous was she,
 Which is a thing that causeth more dispense
 Than worth is all the cheer and ievreience,
 That men them do at feastes and at dances
 Such salutations and countenances

³ Simple
⁴ Never-
theless

Passen, as doth a shadow upon the wall
 But woe is him that payen must for all
 The sely³ husband algate⁴ he must pay,
 He must us clothe and he must us array
 All for his owen worship ichehly
 In which array we dancen jollily
 And if that he may not paráventuic,
 Oi elles list not such dispense endure,
 But thinketh it is wasted and ylost,
 Then must another payen for our cost,
 Oi lend us gold, and that is perilous

12940

This noble Merchant held a worthy house,
 For which he had all day so great repau
 For his largesse, and for his wife was fair,
 That wonder is but heark'neth to my tale
 Amonges all these gwestes great and smale,

12950

There was a monk, a fair man and a bold,
I trow a thuty winter he was old,

12955

That ever in one¹ was drawing to that place
This younge monk, that was so fan of face,

¹ Constant-
ly

Acquainted was so with this goode man,
Sithen² that their first knowledge began,

12960

² Since

That in his house as familiar was he,
As it possible is any friend to be

And for as muchel as this goode man
And eke this monk, of which that I began,

Were bothe two yboin in one villáge,
The monk him claimeth, as for cousinage,

And he agan him said not ones nay,
But was as glad thereof as fowl of day,

For to his heart it was a great pleasánce

Thus been they knit with etein alliaunce,

12970

And each of them 'gan other for t' insue
Of brotherhood, while that their life may dure

Free was Dan John, and namely of dispense

As in that house, and full of diligence

To do pleasance, and also great costáge.

He not forgat to give the leaste page

In all that house, but, after then degree,

He gave the lord, and sithen³ his meinee,⁴

³ After
⁴ Servants.

When that he came, some manner honest thing,

For which they were as glad of his coming

12980

As fowl is fan when that the sun upriseth

No more of this as now, for it sufficeth

But so befell, this merchant on a day

Shope⁵ him to maken ready his array

⁵ Purpos-
ed.

Toward the town of Bruges for to fare,

To buyen there a portión of ware

For which he hath to Paris sent anon

A messenger, and prayed hath Dan John

	That he should come to Saint Denis, and play With him, and with his wife, a day or tway, 12990 Ere he to Bruges went, in alle wise
	This noble monk, of which I you devise, Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence, (Because he was a man of high prudence, And eke an officer out for to ride, To see then granges, and then baines wide,) And unto Saint Denis he cometh anon Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John, Our deare cousin, full of courtesy ²
¹ Jan	With him he brought a jub ¹ of malvesie, ² 13000
² Malmsey	And eke another full of fine veinage,
³ Wild fowl	And volatile, ³ as aye was his usage And thus I let them eat, and drink, and play, This merchant and this monk, a day or tway The thide day this merchant up ariseth, And on his needes sadly ⁴ him aviseth ⁵
⁴ Serious ly	And up into his countour ⁶ house go'th he,
⁵ Consider eth	To reckon with himselven, well may be,
⁶ Count- ing room	Of thilke year, how that it with him stood, And how that he dispended had his good, 13010 And if that he increased were or non His bookes and his bagges many one He lay'th before him on his counting board Full riche was his treasure and his hoard, For which full fast his countour doo he shot, And eke he n'olde ⁷ no man should him let ⁸
⁷ Would not	Of his accountes, for the meane time
⁸ Hinder	And thus he sits, till it was passed prime Dan John was risen in the morrow also, And in the garden walkoth to and fro, 13020 And hath his thinges said full courteously. This goode wife came walking prively

Into the garden, there he walketh soft,	13023	
And him saluteth, as she hath done oft		
A maiden child came in her company,		
Which as her list she may govern and gie, ¹		¹ Guide
For yet under the yarde ² was the maid		² Rod.
'O deare cousin mine, Dan John,' she said,		
'What aileth you so rathe ³ for to arise?'		³ Early,
'Niece,' quod he, 'it ought enough suffice	13030	
Five houres for to sleep upon a night		
But ⁴ it were for an old appalled ⁵ wight,		⁴ Unless
As be these wedded men, that he and daie, ⁶		⁵ Made pale
As in a forme sitteth a weary hare,		⁶ Stare
Were all forstraught ⁷ with houndes great and smale,		⁷ Distracted
But, deare niece, why be ye so pale?		
I trowe certes, that our goode man		
Hath you laboured, since this night began,		
That you were need to resten hastily'		
And with that word he laugh'd full merrily,	13040	
And of his owen thought he wax'd all red		
This faue wife 'gan for to shake her head,		
And sayed thus, 'Yea, God wot all,' quod she		
'Nay, cousin mine, it stands not so with me		
For by that God, that gave me soul and life,		
In all the realm of France is there no wife,		
That lesse lust hath to that sorry play,		
For I may sing alas and wala-wa!		
That I was boin, but to no wight (quod she)		
Daie I not tell how that it stands with me	13050	
Wherefore I think out of this land to wend,		
Or elles of myself to make an end,		
So full am I of dread and eke of care'		
This monk began upon this wife to stare,		
And said, 'Alas' my niece, God forbede,		
That ye for any sorrow, or any drede,		

¹ Runn	For do ¹ yourself but telleth me your grief, Paraventure I may in your mischief Counsel or help and therefore telleth me All your annoy, for it shall be seciée	13057
² Breviary	For on my Portos ² here I make an oath,	
³ Willing or un- willing	That never in my life, for lief nor loth, ³ Ne shall I of no counsel you bewray' 'The same again to you,' quod she, 'I say By God and by this Portos I you swear, Though men me woulde all in pieces tear, Ne shall I never, for to go to hell, Bewray one word of thing that ye me tell, Nought for no cousinage, nor alliaunce, But verily for love and affiaunce'	13070
	Thus be they sworn, and hereupon they kiss'd, And each of them told other what them list 'Cousin,' quod she, 'if that I had a space, As I have none, and namely in this place, Then would I tell a legend of my life, What I have suffer'd since I was a wife With mine husband, all be he your cousin'	
	'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by God and Saint Martin, He n'is no more cousin unto me, Than is the leaf that hangeth on the tree	13080
⁴ Call	I clepe ⁴ him so, by Saint Denis of France, To have the more cause of acquaintaunce Of you, which I have loved specially	
⁵ Assured ly	Aboven alle women sikeily, ⁵ This swear I you on my professioun Telleth your grief, lest that he come adown, And hasteth you, and go'th away anon'	
⁶ Agree able	'My deare love,' quod she, 'O my Dan John, Full hef ⁶ were me this counsel for to hido, But out it must, I may no longer abide	13090

<p> 'Mine husband is to me the worste man, That ever was since that the world began. But since I am a wife, it sit¹ not me To tellen no wight of our privity, Neither in bed, nor in none other place; God shield² I should it tellen for his grace, A wife ne shall not say of her husband But all honour, as I can understand, Save unto you thus much I tellen shall As help me God, he is nought worth at all, In no degree, the value of a fly But yet me gneveth most his niggardy And well ye wot, that women naturally Desuen thinges six, as well as I They woulde that then husbands shoulde be </p>	13091	¹ Becomes.
<p> Hardy, and wise, and rich, and thereto free, And buxom³ to his wife, and fresh a-bed But by that ilke Lord that for us bled, For his honour myselfen for t' array, On Sunday next I muste needes pay An hundred francs, or elles am I loin⁴ Yet were me levei⁵ that I were unborn, Than me were done a slander or villany And if mine husband eke might it espy, I n'ere but lost, and therefore I you pray Lend me this sum, or elles must I dey Dan John, I say, lend me this hundred frankes, </p>	13100	² Forbid.
<p> Pardie, I will not faille you my thanks, If that you list to do that I you pray For at a certain day I will you pay, And do to you what pleasance and service That I may do, right as you list devise </p>	13110	³ Yielding
	13120	⁴ Lost ⁵ Rather

¹ Unless	And but ¹ I do, God take on me vengeance,	13123
	As foul as ever had Genelon of France'	
	This gentle monk answer'd in this manere,	
	'Now truly, mine owen lady dear,	
² Pity	I have (quod he) on you so great a ruth, ²	
	That I you swear, and plighte you my truth,	
³ Gone	That when your husband is to Flanders fair, ³	
	I will deliver you out of this care,	13130
	For I will bingen you an hundred fiances'	
	And with that word he caught her by the flanks,	
	And her embiaced hard, and kiss'd her oft	
	'Go now your way,' quod he, 'all still and soft,	
	And let us dine as soon as that ye may,	
	For by my calender it is prime of day	
	Go now, and be as true as I shall be'	
	'Now elles God forbide, Sn,' quod she,	
	And forth she go'th, as jolly as a pie,	
⁴ Haste	And bade the cookes that they should them hie, ⁴	
	So that men mighten dine, and that anon	13141
	Up to her husband is this wife ygone,	
	And knocketh at his countoun boldely	
	' <i>Qui est la?</i> ' quod he 'Peter, it am I,'	
	Quod she 'What, Sn, how longe will ye fast?	
	How longe time will ye reckon and cast	
	Your summes, and your bookes, and your things?	
	The devil have part of all such reckonings	
⁵ Gift	Ye have enough pardie of Godde's sond ⁵	
	Come down to-day, and let your bagges stond	13150
	Ne be ye not ashamed, that Dan John	
⁶ Cheerless	Shall fasting all this day elenge ⁶ gon?	
	What? let us hear a mass, and go we dine'	
	'Wife,' quod this man, 'litle caust thou divine	

* 'Genelon' One of Charlemagne's officers, whose treachery was the cause of the defeat at Roncevaux, for which he was torn to pieces by horses

The curious businesse that we hâve 13155
 For of us chapmen, all so God me save,
 And by that lord that cleped is Saint Ive,
 Scarcely amonges twenty, ten shall thrive
 Continually, lasting unto our age
 We may well maken cheer and good visage, 13160
 And driven forth the world as it may be,
 And keepen our estate in privacy,
 Till we be dead, or elles that we play
 A pilgrimage, or go out of the way
 And therefore have I great necessity
 Upon this quante¹ would t' avisen² me. 13165
 For evermore must we stand in dread
 Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhead³
 'To Flanders will I go to-morrow at day,
 And come again as soon as ever I may 13170
 For which, my deare wife, I thee beseeke
 As be to every wight buxom⁴ and meek,
 And for to keep our good be curious,
 And honestly governe well our house
 Thou hast enough, in every manner wise,
 That to a thifty household may suffice
 Thee lacketh none array, nor no vitaille,
 Of silver in thy purse shalt thou not fail'
 And with that word his countour door he shet,
 And down he go'th no longer would he let, 13180
 And hastily a masse was there said,
 And speedily the tables were ylad,
 And to the dinner faste they them sped,
 And richely this monk the chapman fed
 And after dinner Dan John soberly
 This chapman took apart, and privily
 He said him thus, 'Cousin, it standeth so,
 That, well I see, to Bruges ye will go,

¹ Strange² Consider³ Trading⁴ Civil

	God and Saint Austyn speede you and guide. 13189 I pray you, cousin, wisely that ye ride, Goveineth you also of your diet Attemprely, ¹ and namely in this heat Betwixt us two needeth no strange fare, ² Farewell, cousin, God shielde you from care If any thing there be by day or night, If it lie in my power and my might, That ye me will command in any wise, It shall be done, ight as ye will devise ‘But one thing ere ye go, if it may be, I woulde prayen you for to lend me 13200 An hundred frankes for a week or twey, For certain beastes that I muste buy, To storen with a place that is ours, (God help me so, I would that it were yours) I shall not faille surely of my day, Not for a thousand francs, a mile way But let this thing be secret, I you pray, For yet to-night these beastes must I buy And fare now well, mine owen cousin deai, <i>Grand mercy</i> of your cost and of your cheer’ 13210
¹ Tempe rately ² Ade	
³ Civilly	This noble merchant gentilly ³ anon Answér’d and said, ‘O cousin mine, Dan John, ⁴ Surely Now sikely ⁴ this is a small request My gold is youres, when that it you lest, ⁵ Merchandise And not only my gold, but my chaffare ⁵ Take what you list, God shielde that ye spare But one thing is, ye know it well enough Of chapmen, that then money is then plough. ⁶ Borrow We may creancen ⁶ while we have a name, But goodless for to be it is no game 13220 Pay it agan, when it li’th in your ease, After my might full fain would I you please’

These hundred frankes set he² forth anon, 13223
 And prively he took them to Dan John
 No wight in all this world wist of this loan,
 Saving this merchant and Dan John alone
 They drink, and speak, and ioam a while and play,
 Till that Dan John rideth to his abbay

The morrow came, and forth this merchant rideth
 To Flanders-ward, his 'prentice well him guideth,
 Till he came in to Bruges merrily 13231
 Now go'th this merchant fast and busily
 About his need, and buyeth, and creanceth,¹
 He neiher playeth at the dice, nor danceth,
 But as a merchant, shortly for to tell,
 He leadeth his life, and there I let him dwell

¹ Borrows

The Sunday next the merchant was agone,
 To Saint Dens ycomen is Dan John,
 With crown and beard all fresh and new yshave
 In all the house there n'as so little a knave,² 13240
 Nor no wight elles, that he n'as full fain,
 For that my lord Dan John was come again
 And shortly to the point right for to gon,
 This fane wife accordeth with Dan John,
 That for these hundred francs he should all night
 Haven hei in his armes bolt-upright.
 And this accord performed was indeed
 In muth all night a busy life they lead
 Till it was day, that Dan John yede³ his way,
 And bade the memne⁴ 'Farewell, have good day'
 For none of them, nor no wight in the town, 13251
 Hath of Dan John ight no suspectioun,
 And forth he rideth home to his abbay,
 Or where him list, no more of him I say
 This merchant, when that ended was the fair,
 To Saint Dens he 'gan for to repaun,

² Servant-
boy³ Went⁴ Servants

	And with his wife he maketh feast and cheer, 13257
¹ Merchant	And telleth her that chaffare ¹ is so dear,
² Agree	That needes must he make a chevysance, ²
³ Agreement for	For he was bound in a recognisance,
⁴ borrow	To payen twenty thousand shelds ³ anon
⁵ French	For which this merchant is to Paris gone
⁶ crown	To borrow of certain friendes that he had
⁷ Took	A certain fiances, and some with him he lad ⁴
	And when that he was come into the town,
⁸ Love	For great churice ⁵ and great affectioun
	Unto Dan John him go'th him first to play;
	Not for to ask or borrow of him money,
⁹ Know	But for to weet ⁶ and see of his welfare,
	And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 13270
¹⁰ Company	As friendes do, when they be met in feire ⁷
	Dan John him maketh feast and merry cheer,
	And he him told again full specially,
	How he had well ybought and graciously
	(Thanked be God) all whole his merchandise
	Save that he must in alle maner wise
	Maken a chevysance, as for his best
	And then he shoulde be in joy and rest
¹¹ Glad	Dan John answered, 'Certes I am fain, ⁸
	That ye in health be comen home again 13280
	And if that I were rich, as have I bliss,
	Of twenty thousand shelds should ye not miss,
	For ye so kindly this othei day
	Lente me gold, and as I can and may
	I thanke you, by God and by Saint Jame
	But natheless I took unto our Dame,
	Your wife at home, the same gold again
	Upon your bench, she wot it well certain,
	By certain tokens that I can her tell
	Now by your leave, I may no longer dwell, 13290

Our abbot will out of this towne anon,
 And in his company I muste gon
 Greet well our Dame, mine owen niece sweet,
 And farewell, deare cousin, till we meet'

13291

This merchant, which that was full wale and wise,
 Cleanced hath, and paid eke in Paris
 To certain Lombards ready in then hond
 The sum of gold, and got of them his bond,
 And home he go'th, mery as a popinjay
 For well he knew he stood in such array,
 That needes must he win in that viage¹

13309

A thousand francs, above all his costage²

¹ Journey² Expense

His wife full ready met him at the gate,
 As she was wont of old usage algate.
 And all that night in mirth they been set,
 For he was rich, and clearly out of debt
 When it was day, this merchant 'gan embrace
 His wife all new, and kiss'd her in her face,
 And up he go'th, and maketh it full tough
 'No more,' quod she, 'by God ye have enough'
 And wantonly again with him she play'd,
 Till at the last this merchant to her said

13309

'By God,' quod he, 'I am a little wroth
 With you, my wife, although it be me loth
 And wot ye why² by God, as that I guess,
 That ye have made a manner strangeness
 Betwixen me and my cousin, Dan John
 Ye should have wained me, ere I had gone,
 That he you had an hundred frankes paid
 By ready token and held him evil apaid,³
 For that I to him spake of chevisance,⁴
 (Me seemed so as by his countenance)
 But natheless by God our heaven king,
 I thoughte not to ask of him no thing

13320

Satisfied

⁴ Borrow-
ing

	I pray thee, wife, no do thou no more so Tell me alway, ere that I from thee go, If any debtor hath in mine abséncé Ypauide thee, lest through thy negligence I might him ask a thing that he hath paid'	13325
¹ Fright- ened	This wife was not afeide ¹ nor afaid, But boldely she said, and that anon, 'Maȳy! I défy that false monk Dan John, I keep ² not of his tokens never a del ³ He took me certain gold, I wot it well What ⁴ evil thedom ⁴ on his monke's snout! For, God it wot, I ween'd withouten doubt, That he had given it me, because of you, To do therewith mine honour and my prow, ⁵ For cousinage, and eke for <i>belle chere</i> , That he hath had full often times here But since I see I stand in such disjoint, I will answer you shortly to the point 'Ye have more slacke debtors than am I: For I will pay you well and readily From day to day, and if so be I fail, I am your wife, score it upon my tail, And I shall pay as soon as ever I may. For by my truth, I have on mine ariay, And not in waste, bestow'd it every del. And for I have bestowed it so well For your honour, for Godde's sake I say, As be not wroth, but let us laugh and play. Ye shall my jolly body have to wed, ⁶ By God I n'll not pay you but a-bed. Forgive it me, mine owen spouse dear, Turn hitherward and maketh better cheer'	13330
² Care ³ Whit		
⁴ Success		
⁵ Profit		13340
⁶ Pledge	This merchant saw there was no remedy And for to chide, it n'ere but a folly,	13350

Since that the thing may not amended be
'Now, wife,' he said, 'and I foigive it thee,
But by thy life ne be no more so large,
Keep bet¹ my good, this give I thee in charge'
Thus endeth now my tale, and God us send
Taling enough, unto our lives' end

13359

' Better

THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE.

'WELL said, by *corpus Domini*,' quod our Host, 13365

'Now longe may thou sailen by the coast,

Thou gentle Master, gentle Maimere

God give the monk a thousand last quad year "

¹ Trick

Aha! fellows, beware of such a jape ¹

The monk put in the manne's hood an ape, 13370

And in his wife's eke, by Saint Austin

Draweth no monkes more into your inn

'But now pass over, and let us seek about,

Who shall now tellen first of all this rout

Another tale ' and with that word he said,

As courteously as it had been a maid,

'My Lady Prioeresse, by your leave,

So that I wist I should you not aggrave,

² Decide

I woulde decmen,² that ye tellen should

A tale next, if so were that ye would 13380

Now will ye vouchesafe, my lady dear?'

'Gladly,' quod she, and said as ye shall hear

* 'A thousand last quad year ' A thousand weight of bad years.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE

O Lord our Lord! thy name how marvellous 13383

Is in this large world yspread! (quod she)

For not all only thy laud¹ precious

¹ Praise

Performed is by men of dignity,

But by the mouth of children thy bounty

Performed is, for on the breast sucking

Sometime shoven they thine heying²

² Praise

Wherefore in laud, as I can best and may, 13390

Of thee and of the white lily flow'r,

Which that thee bare, and is a maid alway,

To tell a story I will do my labou'r,

Not that I may increasen her honour,

For she herselfen is honour and root

Of bounty, next her son, and soules' boot³

³ Help

O mother maid, O maid and mother free!⁴

⁴ Bounti-
ful

O bush unbunt, burning in Moses' sight,

That ravished'st down from the dery,

Though thine humbless, the ghost that in thee'

alight

Of whose virtue, when he thine hearte light,⁵ 13401

⁵ Lighten-
ed, glad-
dened.

Conceived was the Father's sapience

Help me to tell it to thy reverence.

Lady! thy bounty, thy magnificence,

Thy virtue and thy great humility,

There may no tongue express in no science .

For sometime, Lady! ere men pray to thee,

Thou go'st before of thy benignity,

	And gettest us the light, of thy prayeio, To guiden us unto thy son so deai	13409
¹ Skill	My conning ¹ is so weak, O blissful quoen, For to declare thy greate worthuness, That I ne may the weighte not sustene, But as a chuld of twelve month old or less,	
² Scarcely	That can unnethes ² any word express, Right so faie I, and therfore I you pray, Guideth my song, that I shall of you say	
³ Jews' quarter	THERE was in Asia, in a great city, Amonges Christian folk a Jewery, ³ Sustained by a lord of that countiý, For foul usue, and lucie' of villainy,	13420
⁴ Walk	Hateful to Christ, and to his company And through the stieet men mighten ride and wend, ⁴ For it was fice, and open at either end	
	A litle school of Christian folk there stood Down at the farther end, in which there were Children an heape come of Christian blood, That learned in that schoole year by year, Such manner doctrine as men used there This is to say, to singen and to read, As smalle children do in their childhede	13430
⁵ Young clerk. ⁶ Custom	Among these children was a widow's son, A litle clergion, ⁵ seven year of age, That day by day to schoole was his won, ⁶ And eke also, whereas he saw th' imáge Of Christe's mother, had he in uságe, As him was taught, to kneel adown, and say <i>Ave Maria</i> , as he go'th by the way	

Thus hath this widow her little son ytaught
 Our blissful Lady, Christe's mother dear, 13440
 To worship aye, and he forgot it naught
 For sely¹ childe will alway soon leie²
 But aye, when I remember on this mattéie,
 Saint Nicholas stands ever in my pience,
 For he so young to Christ did reverence.

¹ Simple
² Learn.

This little child his little book learning,
 As he sat in the school at his priméie,
 He *Alma redemptoris* heaude sing,
 As children learned their antiphonere *
 And as he durst, he drew him nere and neire,³ 13450
 And hearken'd aye the wordes and the note,
 Till he the firste verse coude⁴ all by rote.

* Nearer

⁴ Knew

Nought wist he what this Latin was to say,
 For he so young and tender was of age,
 But on a day his fellow 'gan he pray
 T' expounden him this song in his langage,
 Or tell him why this song was in uságe
 This pray'd he him to construe and declare,
 Full often time upon his knees bare

His fellow, which that elder was than he, 13460
 Answer'd him thus 'This song, I have heard say,
 Was makéd of our blissful Lady free,
 Her to salute, and eke hei for to pray
 To be our help, and succour when we dey.
 I can no more expound in this mattére
 I learne song, I can⁵ but small grammére'

⁵ Know

'And is this song makéd in reverence

* 'Antiphonere' Chanting alternate verses of the Psalms.

¹ Know
² Degraded
 Of Christe's mother?' said this innocent, 1346
 Now certes I will do my diligence
 To conne¹ it all, ere Christemas be went,
 Though that I for my primer shall be shent,²
 And shall be beaten thries in an hou,
 I will it conne, our Lady for t' honouir'

³ Knew
 His fellow taught him homeward privily
 From day to day, till he coude³ it by rote,
 And then he sung it well and boldely
 From word to word accordyng with the note
 Twies a day it passed through his throat,
 To schooleward and homeward when he went
 On Christe's mother set was his intent 1348

⁴ Cease
 As I have said, throughout the Jewey
 This litle child as he came to and fro,
 Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma redemptoris, overmo
 The sweetness hath his hearte pierced so
 Of Christe's mother, that to her to pray
 He cannot stint⁴ of singing by the way

⁵ Creditable
 Our fiste foe, the serpent Sathanas,
 That bath in Jewes' heart his waspe's nest.
 Upwell'd and said, 'O Ebiake people', alas! 1349
 Is this to you a thing that is honest,⁵
 That such a boy shall walken as him lest
 In your despite, and sing of such sentence,
 Which is against our lawe's reverence?'

From thennesforth the Jewes have conspued
 This innocent out of this world to chase
 An homicide thereto have they hued,

That in an alley had a privy place,
 And as the child 'gan forthby for to pace,
 This cursed Jew him hent,¹ and held him fast,
 And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast

1249C

¹ Seized

I say that in a wardrope² they him threw,
 Whereas these Jewes puigen then entrail.
 O cursed folk¹ of Herodes all new,
 What may your evil intente you avail?
 Murder will out, certáin it will not fail,
 And namely there³ th' honour of God shall spread
 The blood outcureth on your cursed deed.

² Sewer³ Where

O martyr souted⁴ in virginity,
 Now may'st thou sing, and followen ever in one⁵
 The white Lamb celestial, (quod she,) 12511
 Of which the great Evangelist Saint John
 In Patmos wote, which saith that they that gon
 Before this Lamb, and sing a song all new,
 That never fleshy woman they ne knew

⁴ Confirm
 ed
⁵ Continu-
 ally

This poore widow awaiteth all that night
 After her little child, and he came nought
 For which as soon as it was daye's light,
 With face pale of dread and busy thought,
 She hath at school and elleswhere him sought, 12520
 Till finally she 'gan so far espy,
 That he last seen was in the Jewery

With mother's pity in her breast enclosed
 She go'th, as she were half out of her mynd,
 To every place, where she hath supposed
 By likelihood her little child to find
 And ever on Christe's mother meek and kind

	<p>She cried, and at the laste thus she wrought, 13528 Among the cursed Jewes she him sought</p>
¹ Asketh	<p>She feyneth,¹ and she prayeth piteously To every Jew that dwell'd in thilke place, To tell her, if hei child went ought forthby They saiden, Nay, but Jesu of his grace Gave in hei thought, within a litle space, That in that place after hei son she cried,</p>
² Where	<p>There² he was casten in a pit beside</p>
	<p>O grete God, that performest thy laud By mouth of innocents, lo here thy might! This gem of chastity, this emeraud, And eke of martyrdom the ruby bight, 13540</p>
³ Cut	<p>There he with thioat ycorven³ lay upright, He <i>Alma redemptoris</i> 'gan to sing So loud, that all the place 'gan to ring</p>
	<p>The Christian folk, that through the streeete went, In comen, for to wonder upon this thing And hastily they for the provost sent He came anon withouten tarrying,</p>
⁴ Praiseth	<p>And heueth⁴ Christ, that is of heaven king, And eke his mothei, honour of mankind, And after that the Jewes let he bind 13550</p>
⁵ Scarcely	<p>This child with piteous lamentation Was taken up, singing his song alway And with honour and great proccession, They carren him unto the next abbay His mother swooning by the biere lay, Unnethes⁵ might the people that was there This newe Rachel bringen from his bier</p>

With torment, and with shameful death each one
 The provost doth¹ these Jewes for to steirve,² 13559
 That of this murder wist,³ and that anon,
 He n'olde⁴ no such cursedness observe
 Evil shall he have, that evil will deserve
 Therefore with wilde horse he did them draw,
 And after that he hung them by the law

¹ Causeth.
² Die
³ Knew
⁴ Would
 not

Upon his bier aye h'th this innocent
 Before the altar while the masse last
 And after that, th' abbót with his convént
 Have sped them for to bury him full fast
 And when they holy water on him cast,
 Yet spake this child, when spient⁵ was th' holy
 water,
 And sang, *O Alma redemptoris mater*' 13570

⁵ Sprink-
 led

This abbot, which that was an holy man,
 As monkes be, or elles ought to be,
 This younge child to conjure he began,
 And said, 'O deare child! I halse⁶ thee
 In virtue of the holy Trinity,
 Tell me what is thy cause for to sing,
 Since that thy throat is cut, to my seeming'

⁶ Implore

'My throat is cut unto my necke-bone,'
 Saide this child, 'and as by way of kind⁷
 I should have died, yea longe time agone,
 But Jesus Christ, as ye in bookes find,
 Will that his glory last and be in mind,
 And for the worship of his mother dear,
 Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clear.

13580

⁷ Nature

'This well⁸ of mercy, Christe's mother sweet,

⁸ Fountain.

¹ Knowledge	I loved alway, as after my conung ¹	13587
² Leave	And when that I my life should foilete, ² To me she came, and bade me for to sing This anthem verily in my dymg, As ye have heard, and, when that I had sung, Methought she laid a gram upon my tongue	
³ Bountiful	‘ Wherefore I sing, and sing I must certain In honou of that blissful maiden free, ³ Till from my tongue off taken is the gram And after that thus saide she to me, “ My little child, then will I fetchen thee, When that the gram is from thy tongue ytake Be not aghast, I will thee not forsake ”’	
⁴ Seen	This holy monk, this abbot him mean I, His tongue outcaught, and took away the gram, And he gave up the ghost full softly And when this abbot had this wonder sem, ⁴ His salte teares tirl’d adown as rain	13600
⁵ Flat	And groff ⁵ he fell all plat ⁶ upon the ground,	
⁶ Level	And still he lay, as he had been ybound	
⁷ Praising	The convent lay eke on the pavement Weeping and heying ⁷ Christ’s mothei dear And after that they risen, and forth been went, And took away this martyr from his bier, And in a tomb of marble stones clear	13610
⁸ Where	Enclosen they his little body sweet	
⁹ Giant	There ⁸ he is now, God lene ⁹ us for to meet	
	O younge Hugh of Lincoln! slau also With cused Jewes, as it is notable,	

For it n'is but a little while ago,
Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That of his mercy God so merciáble
On us his greate mercy multiply,
For reuerence of his mother Mary.

13618

NOTES

ON

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

VER 5583 I have already given my reasons for following the best MSS in placing this prologue of the Wife of Bath next to the Man of Law's tale ('Discourse,' &c, § XVI) The want of a few verses to connect this prologue with the preceding tale was perceived long ago, and the defect was attempted to be supplied by the author of the following lines, which, in MS B, are prefixed to the common Prologue —

'Oure oost gan tho to loke up anon
Gode men, quod he, hekeneth everichone,
As evere mote I dynke wyn or ale,
This maichant hath itold a mery tale,
Howe Januarie hadde a lither jape,
His wyf put in his hood an ape
But hereof I wil leve off as now
Dame wyf of Bathe, quod he, I pray you
Telle us a tale now nexte after this
Sn oost, quod she, so god my soule blis,
As I fully thereto wil consente,
And also it is myn hole entente,
To done yow alle disporte as that I can
But holde me excused, I am a woman
I can not reherse as these clerkes kune
And riyt anon she hath hir tale bygunne
Experience,' &c

The same lines are in MSS Bod β and ζ I print them here, in order to justify myself for not inserting them in the text

Ver 5626 'I have wedded five' After this verse, the six following are in MSS C 1, HA, C 2, and in Edit Ca 2 —

'Of whiche I have pyked out the beste
Bothe of here nether puis and of here cheste
Diverse scoles maken parfyt cloikes,
And diverse practyk in many sondry weikes
Maken the werkman parfyt schynly
Of five husbondes scolaryng am I,
Welcome the sixthe,' &c

If these lines are not Chaucer's, they are certainly more in his manner than the generality of the imitations of him. Perhaps he wrote them, and afterwards blotted them out. They come in but awkwardly here, and he has used the principal idea in another place (Merch T, ver 9301.)

Ver. 5657. 'The dart is set' See 'Lydg Boc,' fol. xxvi —

'And oft it happeneth, he that hath best ion
Doth not the spere like his desert possede'

Ver 5677 'I grant it well, I have none envy,
Though maidenhead prefer bigamy.'

So these two verses stand, without any material difference, in all the MSS. If they are right, we must understand 'prefer' to signify the same as 'be preferred to'. Knowing no example of such a construction, I have ventured at an alteration of the text. It might have been as well, perhaps, to have left the first line untouched, and to have corrected the second only thus

'Though maidenhead be prefer'd to bigamy'

Ver 5681 'A lord in his household' See 2 Tim 11 20

Ver 5764 'Whiteth Ptolemy' In the margin of MS C 1, is the following quotation 'Qui per alios non corrigitur, alii per ipsum corriguntur'. But I cannot find any such passage in the 'Almageste'. I suspect that the Wife of Bath's copy of Ptolemy was very different from any that I have been able to meet with. (See another quotation from him, ver 5906.)

Ver 5799 'The bacon—at Dunmow.' See Blount's 'Ant Tenuies,' p 162, and 'P P,' 446. This whimsical institution was not peculiar to Dunmow. There was the same in Bretagne. 'A l'Abbaie Saint Melane, près Rennes, y a, plus de six cens

ans sont, un costé de laid encoire tout frais et non corrompu et neantmoins voué et ordonné aux premiers, qui par an et par ensemble maniez ont vescu san debat, grondement, et sans s'en repentir' ('Contes d'Eutrap,' t. ii p. 161)

Ver. 5810 'Sweaien and lien' 'Rom de la R,' ver. 19013 —

'Car plus hardiment que nulz horns
Certainement jurent et mentent'

Ver. 5811 ('I say not this') This parenthesis seems to be rather belonging to Chaucer himself than to the Wife of Bath

Ver. 5814 'Shall beaien them on hand' 'Shall make them believe falsely,' the cow is 'wood' The latter words may either signify that the cow is 'mad,' or 'made of wood' Which of the two is the preferable interpretation, it will be safest not to determine, till we can discover the old story to which this phrase seems to be a proverbial allusion

Ver. 5817 'Sir old Kaynard' 'Cagnard,' or 'Caignard,' was a French term of reproach, which seems to have been originally derived from 'Canis' (Menage, in v) In the following speech it would be endless to produce all Chaucer's imitations The beginning is from the fragment of Theophrastus, quoted by St Jerome, c. Jovin, l. 1, and by John of Salisbury, 'Polycrat,' l. viii. c. xi (See also 'Rom de la R,' ver. 8967, et suiv)

Ver. 5882. 'Chamberere' A chamber-maid, Fl. (See 8695, 8853)

'Son varlet et sa chamberiere,
Aussi sa seur et sa nourrice
Et sa mere, si moult n'est nice'

('Rom de la R,' 14480)

Ver. 5923 'In the apostle's name' See 1 Tim. ii. 9.

Ver. 6042 'Metellus' This story is told by Pliny ('Nat Hist' l. xiv. c. 13) of one Mecenius, but Chaucer probably followed Valerius Maximus, (l. vi. c. 3)

Ver. 6049 'In woman vinolent' 'Rom de la R,' 14222.

'Car puisque femme est enyvree
El n'a point en soy de deffence'

Ver. 6065. 'Saint Joce,' or Josse Sanctus Judocus was a

saint of Ponthieu ('Vocab. Hagiol,' prefixed to Menage, 'Etymol Fl.')

Ver 6137. 'Visitations' 'Rom de la R,' 12492.—

'Souvent vorse à la mere Eglise,
Et face visitations
Aux nopces, aux processions,
Aux jeux, aux festes, aux caroles'—

Ver 6151 'Bobance' 'Boasting,' 'pride,' Fl, 'en oigueil et en bobans' (Froissart, v iv c 70) In the Edit it is 'bos-tance' The thought in the next lines is taken from 'Rom de la R,' 13914 —

'Moult a soums povie recours,
Et met en grand peril la druge,
Qui n'a qu'ung parveys à refuge'

Ver 6191-6194 These four lines are wanting in MSS A., Ask 1, 2, and several others And so are the eight lines from ver 6201 to ver 6208, inclusive They certainly might very well be spared

Ver 6216 'With his fist' MS A reads, 'on the lyste,' and so does Ed Ca 2, with the addition of (what was at first a marginal gloss) 'on the cheke' In support of this reading it may be observed, that Sir Thomas More, among many Chaucerian phrases, has this, in his 'Merry Jest of a Sergeant,' &c —

'And with his fist
Upon the lyst
He gave him such a blow'

Ver 6227 'Open-headed' This is literally from Val Max, l vi c 3, 'uxorem dimisit, quod eam capite aperto foris versatam cognoverat' He gives the reason of this severity 'Lex enim tibi meos tantum præfinit oculos, quibus formam tuam approbes His decous instrumenta compara his esto speciosa,' &c

Ver 6230 'A summer-game' This expression, I suppose, took its rise from the summer being the usual season for games. It is used in 'P P,' fol xxvii —

'I have lever here an harloty, or a somers game'

This story is also from Val Max, l vi. c 3 P Sempionius Sophus—'conjugem repudi notâ affect, nihil aliud quam se ignorante ludos ausam spectare.

Ver 6253. 'Valerie, and Theophiast' Some account has been given of these two treatises in the 'Discourse,' &c, note^m p cxx As to the rest of the contents of this volume, 'Hieronymus' (Contra Iovinianum,) and 'Tertullian' ('De Pallo') are sufficiently known, and so are the Letters of Eloisa and Abelard, the Parables of Solomon, and Ovid's 'Art of Love' I know of no 'Trotula' but one, whose book, 'Curandarum Aegritudinum Muliebrum ante, in, et post Partum,' is printed 'int Medicos Antiquos,' Ven 1547 What is meant by 'Chrysippus' I cannot guess.

Ver 6258 'Which book was there' I have here departed from the MSS, which all read, 'In which book there was eke' Perhaps, however, it might be sufficient to put a full stop after 'Jovinian'

Ver 6284 'Exaltation' In the old astrology, a planet was said to be in its exaltation, when it was in that sign of the zodiac in which it was supposed to exert its strongest influence The opposite sign was called its dejection, as in that it was supposed to be weakest To take the instance in the text, the exaltation of Venus was in Pisces, (see also ver. 10587,) and her dejection, of course, in Vugo. But in Virgo was the exaltation of Mercury

'She is the welthe and the rysynge
The lust the joy and the lykynge
Unto Mercury'—

(Gower, 'Conf Am' l vii fol 147) So in ver 10098, Cancer is called 'Jove's exaltation.'

Ver 6303 'Then read he' Most of the following instances are mentioned in the 'Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non Ducenda Uxor' See also 'Rom de la R,' 9140, 9615, et suiv

Ver 6329 'Of Lima—and of Lucie' In the 'Epistola Valerii,' &c, (MS Reg 12, D iii,) the story is told thus —'Luna virum suum interfecit quem nimis odivit Lucia suum quem nimis amavit. Illa sponte miscuit aconita. hæc decepta furorē propinavit pro amoris poculo.' 'Lima' and 'Luna' in many MSS are only distinguishable by a small stroke over the 'i,' which may be easily overlooked where it is, and supposed where it is not.

Ver 6339 'Latumeus' In MSS Ask 1, 2, it is 'Latynius,' in the 'Epistola Valerii,' just cited, 'Pavonius flens ait Almo'

Ver 6355 'Mo proverbs' For the following aphorisms see Prov. xx 9, 19, xi 22 The observation in ver 6364 is in Herodotus (B i p 5, Ed Wesseling)

Ver 6414 'The Sompnou heard the Fina gale' The same word occurs below. ver 6918, 'and let the Sompnou gale' In both places it seems to be used metaphorically 'Galan,' Sax, signifies 'caneie' It is used literally in the 'Court of Love,' ver 1357, where the nightingale is said 'to cry and gale' Hence its name, 'Nightegale,' or 'Nightengale' In the Iceland, 'at gala' is 'ululaie, Galli more exclamaie,' and 'Hana gal,' 'Gallicinium' (Gudm And Lex Iceland)

Ver 6439 'King Aitou' I hope that Chaucei, by placing his elf-queen 'in the days of King Aitou,' did not mean to intimate that the two monarchies were equally fabulous and visionary Master Wace has judged more candidly of the exploits of our British hero —

'Ne tut mensonge, ne tut ven ,
Ne tut folie, ne tut saven
Tant unt li conteor conté,
E li fableor tant fablé,
Pur les contes onbelecer,
Ke tut unt fait fable sembler'

Le Brut MS Cotton, Vitell A 7

Ver 6441 'Faeie' 'Féerie,' F1, from 'Fée,' the French name for those fantastical beings which in the Gothic languages are called 'alfs,' or 'elves' The corresponding names to 'Fée,' in the other Romance dialects, are 'Fata,' Ital, and 'Hada,' Span, so that it is probable that all three are derived from the Lat 'Fatum,' which, in the barbarous ages, was corrupted into 'Fatus' and 'Fata' (See Menage, in v 'Fee,' Du Cange, in v 'Fadus')

Our system of faerie would have been much more complete, if all our ancient writers had taken the same laudable pains to inform us upon that head, that Geivase of Tilbery has done ('Ot Imp Dec' in c 61, 62) He mentions two species of dæmons in England, which I do not recollect to have met with in any other author. The first are those, 'quos Galli Neptunos,

Angli Portunos nominant' Of the others he says—'Est in Anghâ quoddam dæmonum genus, quod suo idiomate Giant nominant, adinstar pulli equini anniculi, tibus erectum, oculis scintillantibus,' &c

This last seems to have been a dæmon *sui generis*, but the 'portunus' appears to have resembled the 'gobelin,' as described by Oideus, 'Vital,' l v p 556 Speaking of the miracles of St Tatunnus at Evieux in Normandy, he says, 'Dæmon enim, quem de Dianæ phano expulit, adhuc in eâdem uibe degit, et in variis frequentè formis apparens neminem lædit Hunc vulgus "Gobelinum" appellat, et per merita Sancti Taurini ab humanâ læsione coercitum usque hodie affirmat'

In the same manner Geivase says of the 'portuni'—'Id illis insitum est, ut obsequi possint et obesse non possint' He adds indeed an exception—'Verum unicum quasi modulum nocendi habent Cum enim inter ambiguas noctis tenebras Angli solitarii quandoque equitant, Portunus nonnunquam invisus equitanti se copulat, et cum diutius comitatur euntem, tandem loris arcriptis equum in lutum ad manum ducit, in quo dum infixus volutatur, Portunus exiens cachinnum facit, et sic hujusmodi ludibrio humanam simplicitatem deidet' This is exactly such a prank as our 'Hob,' or 'Hop, goblin' was used to play (See the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' Act 2, Scene 1, and Drayton's 'Nymphidia')†

It should be observed, that the 'portuni,' according to Geivase, were of the true faery size, 'staturâ pusilli, dimidium pollicis non habentes' But then, indeed, they were 'senili vultu, facie corrugatâ' In 'Dec,' i c 18, he describes another species of harmless dæmons, called 'folleti,' 'esprits follets,' F1, 'foletti,' Ital

The 'incubus' mentioned below, (ver 6462,) was a faery of not quite so harmless a nature He succeeded to the ancient

* Gobehnum, v Du Cange, Gloss Gr v Κοβόλοι

† I shall here correct a mistake of my own in the 'Discourse,' &c, note * p cxxv I have supposed that Shakspeare might have followed Drayton in his Faery system I have since observed that 'Don Quixote,' which was not published till 1605, is cited in the 'Nymphidia,' whereas we have an edition of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' in 1600 So that Drayton undoubtedly followed Shakspeare.

'fauni,' and like them was supposed to inflict that oppression, which goes under the name of the 'ephaltes,' or 'nightmare' Pliny calls the ephialtes 'faunorum in quiete ludibria,' ('N II,' l 25 x) The 'incubus,' however, as Chaucer insinuates, excited his powers for love as well as for hate Geivus Tilber 'Dec,' i c 17 'Vidimus quosdam Dæmones tanto zelo mulieres amare quod ad inaudita prorumpunt ludibria, et cum ad concubitum earum accedunt multâ mole eas opprimunt, nec ab aliis videntur'

Ver 6457 'Undermeals' The undermeal, *i e*, 'undern-mele,' was the dinner of our ancestors (See the note on ver 8136)

Ver 6466 'Came riding fro river' or, 'fro the river,' as it is in some MSS It means 'from hawking at water-fowl' Froissart, v i c 140—'Le Comte de Flandres estoit tousjours en riviére—un jour advint qu'il alla voler en la riviére—et getta son fauconner un faucon apres le heron, et le Comte aussi un' So, in c 210, he says, that Edward III had with him in his army 'trente fauconniers à cheval, chargez d'oiseaux, et bien soixante couples de forts chiens et autant de levriers dont il alloit, chacun jour, ou en chace ou en riviére, ainsi que il luy plaisoit' Sir Thopas is described as following this knightly sport, ver. 13665 —

'He coude hunte at the wilde dere,
And ride on hauking for the rivere
With grey goshaue on honde'

Ver 6710. 'Full seld up useth' Dante, 'Puig,' vii 121.—

'Rade volte risurge per li rami
L'humana probitate et questo vuole
Quei che la dà, perche dà se si chiama'

Ver. 6741 'For gentilless' A great deal of this reasoning is copied from Boethius, 'De Consol,' l. iii Pt. 6 See also 'R R,' 2184, et seq —

'For villanie maketh villeine,
And by his dedes a chorle is seme,' &c

Ver 6777. 'Poverty is hateful good' In this commendation of poverty, our author seems plainly to have had in view the following passage of a fabulous conference between the Emperor

Adrian' and Secundus the philosophi, reported by Vincent of Beauvais ('Spec Histoi' l x c 71) — 'Quid est Paupertas? Odibile bonum, sanitatis mater, remotio curarum, sapientiæ repositrix, negotium sine damno, possessio absque calumnia, sine sollicitudine felicitas' What Vincent has there published appears to have been extracted from a larger collection of 'Gnomæ' under the name of Secundus, which are still extant in Greek and Latin (See Fabric 'Bib Gr,' l vi c x, and MS. Harl 399) The author of 'Pierce Ploughman' has quoted and paraphrased the same passage, fol 75

Ver 6781 'Elenge' 'Strange,' probably from the old Fr 'esloingné' So in 'The Cuckow and Nightingale,' ver 115 —

'Thy songes ben so elenge in good fay'

And in 'P P,' fol 3 b —

'Where the cat is a kiten, the court is full elenge'

See also fol. 46. b

Ver 6797 'For filth, and eld also, so' Though none of the MSS that I have seen authoize the insertion of the second 'so,' it seems absolutely necessary

Ver 6858 'Auctoritees' 'Auctoritas' was the usual word for what we call a 'text' of Scripture MS Harl 106, 10 'Expositio auctoritatis, Majus gaudium super uno peccatore.' Ibid 21, 'Expositio auctoritatis, Stetit populus de longe,' &c

Ver 6931 'The nale.' The ale-house. 'P P,' fol 32 b —

'And than satten some and songe at the nale'

Skinner supposes it to be a corruption of 'inn-ale,' which is not impossible

Ver 6959 'An old ribbe' He calls her below (ver 7155) an 'old rebeck' They were both names for the same musical instrument See Menage, in v 'Rebec' 'Ribeba,' in the 'Decameron' (ix 5), is rendered by Maçon, the old French translator, 'rebec' and 'guiteine' Chaucer uses also the diminutive 'ribble,' (ver. 3331, 4395) How this instrument came to be put for an old woman, I cannot guess, unless perhaps from its shrillness. An old writer, quoted by Du Cange, in v 'Bandosa,' has the following lines in his description of a concert —

'Quidam rebeccam arcuabant
Muliebrem vocem confingentes'

Ver 6990 'Waiangles ' I have nothing to say either in refutation or support of Mr Speght's explanation of this word,— "A kind of birds full of noise, and very ravenous, preying upon others, which, when they have taken, they use to hang upon a thorne or picket, and teare them in peeces, and devour them And the common opinion is, that the thorne, whereupon they thus fasten them and eat them, is afterward poisonous In Staffordshire and Shropshire the name is common,"—except that Cotgrave, in his 'Fi Diet,' explains 'aneat' to signify 'The ravenous bird called a shrike, nymmurder, waiangle'

Ver 7018 'Too heavy or too hot ' We have nearly the same expression in Floissart, (v 1 c 229,) 'Ne laissoient riens à prendre, s'il n'estoit trop chaud, trop froid, ou trop pesant'

Ver 7092 'As to the Pythoness did Samuel ' So MS A. The Editt read—

'As the Phitoness did to Samuel,'

which is certainly wrong (See 1 Sam xxvii) Our author uses 'Phitoness' for 'Pythonesse' ('H F,' iii 171) And so does Gower ('Conf Amant,' fol 140) —

'The Phitoness in Samary'

Ver 7145 'Laid ' A common appellative for a horse, from its gray colour, as 'bayard' was from 'bay' (See before, ver. 4113) 'P P,' fol. 92 —

'He lyght downe of harde and ladde him in his hand'

Bp. Douglas, in his Vugil, usually puts 'hairt' for 'albus,' 'incanus,' &c

Ver 7164 'Thou olde very tiate ' So MSS C 1, Ask. 1, 2, and Ed Ca 2 The later Editt read 'vinitiate' in one word We may suppose 'tiate' to be used for 'tiot,' a common term for an old woman Keyser ('Antiq Sept.' p 503) refers it to the same original with the German 'diud,' or 'diut,' 'Saga'

Ver 7269 'And now hath Sathanas, saith he ' So MSS C. 1, Ask 1, 2 I have put these two lines in a parenthesis, as 'he' refers to the narrator, the Sompnour

Ver 7277. 'A twenty thousand ' I have added 'A' for the sake of the verse Chaucer frequently prefixes it to nouns of number. See ver 10697 —

'And up they risen, wel a ten or twelve'

Ver 7299 'To tientals ' 'Un'tientel,' F1, was a service of thirty masses, which were usually celebrated upon as many different days, for the dead (Du Cange, in v 'Tientale')

Ver 7327 'Askaunce that he woulde for them play ' The Glossary interprets 'ascaunce' to mean 'askew, aside, sideways, in a side view,' upon what authority I know not It will be better to examine the other passages in which the same word occurs, before we determine the sense of it See ver 16306 —

'Ascaunce that craft is so light to leie'

'Tio,' 1 285 —

'Ascaunce, lo ' is this not wisely spoken?'

Ibid, 292 —

'Ascaunce, what, may I not stonden here?'

'Lydg Tiag,' fol 136, b —

'Ascaunce I am of maners most chaungeable'

In the first and last instance, as well as in the text, 'ascaunce' seems to signify simply 'as if,' 'quasi' In the two others it signifies a little more, 'as if to say' This latter signification may be clearly established from the third line, which, in the Italian original, ('Filostrato di Boccaccio,' l 1,) stands thus —

'Quasi dicesse, e no ci si puo stare'

So that 'ascaunce' is there equivalent to 'quasi dicesse' in Italian.

As to the etymology of this word, I must confess myself more at a loss I observe, however, that one of a similar form in the Teutonic has a similar signification 'Als-kacks,' 'Quasi, quasi vero,' Kuhn Our 'as' is the same with 'als,' Teut and Sax It is only a further corruption of 'al so' Perhaps, therefore, 'ascaunce' may have been originally 'als-kansse' 'Kansse' in Teut is 'chance,' F1 and Eng

I will just add, that this very rare phrase was also used, as I suspect, by the author of the 'Continuation of the Canterbury Tales,' first printed by Mr Urry (Piol, ver 361) —

'And al ascaunce she loved him wel, she toke him by the swere'

It is printed 'a staunce'

Ver. 7329. 'A Godde's kichel.' 'It was called a "Godde's

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Ver 7277 'A twenty thousand.' I have added 'A' for the sake of the verse. Chaucer frequently prefixes it to nouns of number. See ver 10697 —

'And up they risen, wel a ten or twelve'

Vel 7299 'To tientals ' 'Un^otientel,' F₁, was a service of thirty masses, which were usually celebrated upon as many different days, for the dead (Du Cange, in v. 'Tientale')

Vel 7327 'Ascaunce that he woulde for them pray ' The Glossary interprets 'ascaunce' to mean 'askew, aside, sideways, in a side view,' upon what authority I know not It will be better to examine the other passages in which the same word occurs, before we determine the sense of it See vel 16306 —

'Ascaunce that craft is so light to lete'

'Tio,' l. 285 —

'Ascaunce, lo' is this not wisely spoken?'

Ibid, 292 —

'Ascaunce, what, may I not stonden here?'

'Lydg Tiag,' fol 136, b —

'Ascaunce I am of maners most chaungeable'

In the first and last instance, as well as in the text, 'ascaunce' seems to signify simply 'as if,' 'quasi' In the two others it signifies a little more, 'as if to say' This latter signification may be clearly established from the third line, which, in the Italian original, ('Filostrato di Boccaccio,' l 1,) stands thus —

'Quasi dicesse, e no ci si puo stare'

So that 'ascaunce' is there equivalent to 'quasi dicesse' in Italian

As to the etymology of this word, I must confess myself more at a loss I observe, however, that one of a similar form in the Teutonic has a similar signification. 'Als-kacks,' 'Quasi, quasi vero,' Kilian Our 'as' is the same with 'als,' Teut and Sax It is only a further corruption of 'al so' Perhaps, therefore, 'ascaunce' may have been originally 'als-kansse' 'Kansse' in Teut is 'chance,' F₁ and Eng

I will just add, that this very rare phrase was also used, as I suspect, by the author of the 'Continuation of the Canterbury Tales,' first printed by Mr Urry (P₁ol, vel 361) —

'And al ascaunce she loved him wel, she toke him by the swere'

It is printed 'a stance.'

Vel. 7329. 'A Godde's kichel ' 'It was called a "Godde's

kichel," because godfathers and godmothers used commonly to give one of them to their godchildren, when they asked blessing' (Sp) And so we are to suppose a 'Godde's halfpenny,' in ver. 7331, was called for the same reason, &c But this is all *gratis dictum*, I believe. The phrase is French, and the true meaning of it is explained by M de la Monnoye in a note upon the 'Contes de B D Periers' (t u p 107) — 'Belle seruite de Dieu' 'Expression du petit peuple, qui raporte pieusement tout à Dieu — Rien n'est plus commun dans la bouche des bonnes vieilles, que ces especes d'Hebraïsmes Il m'en coute un bel ecu de Dieu, Il ne me reste que ce pauvre enfant de Dieu, Donez moi une benite aumône de Dieu'

Ver 7442 'Fifty year' See Du Cange, in v 'Sempectæ' Peculiar honours and immunities were granted by the Rule of St Benedict to those monks, 'qui quinquaginta annos in ordine exegerant, quos annum jubilæum exegisse vulgo dicimus' It is probable that some similar regulation obtained in the other Orders

Ver 7488 'Mendicants' In MS A it is 'mendinants,' both here and below, (ver 7494,) which reading, though not agreeable to analogy, is perhaps the true one, as I find the word constantly so spelled in the Stat 12 R II, c 7-10

Ver 7511 'Jovinian' Against whom St Jerome wrote; or, perhaps, the supposed emperor of that name in the 'Gesta Romanorum,' (c lix,) whose story was worked up into a Morality, under the title of 'L'orgueil et présomption de l'Empereur Jovinien—à 19 personages' It was printed at Lyons, 1581, 8vo, 'sui une vieille copie' (Du Verdier, in v 'Jovinien') The same story is told of a 'Robert, King of Sicily,' in an old English poem (MS Harl 1701) Mr Watson has given large extracts from an Oxford MS, as I suppose, of the same poem ('Hist of Eng Po,' p 184)

Ver 7514 'Of full great reverence' The Editt have changed this to 'ful hitel,' but the reading of the MSS may stand, if it be understood ironically

Ver 7600 'As saith Senec' This story is told by Seneca, ('De Ira,' l i c xvi) of Cn Piso It is also told of an Emperor Elacius, ('Gesta Romanorum,' cap cxi)

Ver 7625 'Lious Cambyses' *This story is also in Seneca, (l iii c xiv) It differs a little from one in Herodotus, (l iii)

Ver 7657 'Singeth *Placebo*,' The allusion is to an anthem in the Romish Church, from Psalm cxvi 9, which in the Vulgate stands thus 'Placebo Domino in regione vivorum' Hence the complacent brother in the 'Merchant's Tale' is called 'Placebo'

Ver 7662 'The river of Gisen' It is called 'Gyndes' in Seneca (lib cit c xxi), and in Herodotus, (l i)

Ver 7666 'That women' So the best MSS, agreeably to the authors just quoted The Editr have—

'That men might ride and wade,' &c

See J Mandeville tells the story of the Euphiates —'Because that he had sworn, that he sholde putte the ryvere in suche poynt, that a womman myghte wel passe there, withouten castynge of of hne clothes' (P 49)

Ver 7710 'The letter of our seal' There is a letter of this kind in Stevens ('Supp to Dugd,' vol ii App p 370) — 'Fratres Prædicatores, Waiwice admittunt Thomam Cannings et uxorem ejus Agnetem ad participationem omnium bonorum operum conventus ejusdem' It is under seal of the Prior, 4 Non Octob An Dom 1347

Ver 7740 The remainder of this tale is omitted in MSS B, G, and Bod β, and instead of it they give us the following 'lame and impotent conclusion' —

'He ne had nozt ellis for his sermon
To part among his biethren when he cam home
And thus is this tale idon
For we were almost att the toun'

I only mention this to shew what liberties some copyists have taken with our author.

Ver 7879 'Were new spoused' It has been observed in note upon ver 812, that Chaucer frequently omits the governing pronoun before his verbs The instances there cited were of personal pronouns. In this line, and some others, which I shall point out here, the relatives 'who' or 'which' are omitted in the same manner (See ver 7411, 13035, 16049)

Ver 7910 'Lynyan,' or 'Liman' The person meant was an eminent lawyer, and made a great noise, as we say, in his time

His name of late has been so little known, that I believe nobody has been angry with the Editor for calling him 'Livian'. There is some account of him in Panziolus ('De Cl Leg Interpret' l iii c xxv) — 'Joannes, a Lignano, agri Mediolanensis vico, oriundus, et ob id Lignanus dictus,' &c. One of his works, entitled, 'Tractatus de Bello,' is extant in MS Reg, 13, B. ix. He compiled it at Bologna in the year 1360.

He was not, however, a mere lawyer. Chaucer speaks of him as excelling also 'in philosophy,' and so does his epitaph (Ap Panziol, l. c) —

'Gloria Lignani, titulo decoratus utroque,
Legibus et sacro Canone dives erat,
Alter Aristoteles, Hippocras erat et Ptolomæus

The only specimen of his philosophy that I have met with is in MS Harl, 1006. It is an astrological work, entitled, 'Conclusiones Judicii composite per Dominum Johannem de Lyviano (l Lymiano) super coronacione Domini Urbani Pape VI. A.D. 1378, xviii April, &c, cum Diagrammate'. He also supported the election of Urban as a lawyer (Panziol, l c et 'Annal Eccles' a Raynaldo, tom xvii). He must, therefore, have lived at least to 1378, though in the printed epitaph he is said to have died in 1368, xvi Febr.

Ver. 7927 'To Emily-ward'. One of the regions of Italy was called Æmilia, from the Via Æmilia, which crossed it from Placentia to Rimini. Placentia stood upon the Po ('Pitisc Lex Ant Rom,' in v 'Via Æmilia.') Petiarch's description of this part of the course of the Po is a little different. He speaks of it as dividing the Æmilian and Flaminian regions from Venice—'Æmiliam atque Flaminiam Venciamque discrimians'. But our author's 'Emily' is plainly taken from him.

As the following tale is almost wholly translated from Petiarch, (see the 'Discourse,' &c, § XX,) it would be endless to cite particular passages from the original, especially as it is printed in all the editions of Petiarch's works. It is there entitled, 'De obedientia et fide uxoris Mythologia'.

Ver. 8136 'The time of undeyn.' The Glossary explains this rightly to mean 'the third hour of the day, or nine of the

clock' In ver 8857, where this word is used again, the original has 'hoia tertia' In this place it has 'hoia prandii' From whence we may collect that in Chaucer's time the 'third hour,' or 'undein,' was the usual hour of dinner

I have never met with any etymology of this word 'undein,' but the following passage might lead one to suspect that it had some reference to 'undernoon' 'In the town-book belonging to the corporation of Stanford, 28 E IV, it is ordeyned, that no person opyn thei sack, or set thei corn to sale afore hour of ten of the bell, or els the undernone bell be longyn' (Peck's 'Desid Cui,' vol 1 b vi p 36) In the Icelandic Diet 'ond-verne' is rendered 'mane diei'

Ver 8258 'Full of nouches' The common reading is 'ouches,' but I have retained the reading of the best MSS, as it may possibly assist somebody to discover the meaning of the word I observe, too, that it is so written in the inventory of the effects of Henry V ('Rot Paul,' 2 H VI n 31) 'Item 6 Bioches et nouches d'oi garniz de divers garnades pois 31^d d'or puis 35^s'

Ver 8466 'Of Pavie' When the text of this tale was printed, I had not sufficiently adverted to the reading of the best MSS which is uniformly 'Panik' I have little doubt that it should be 'Panik' both here and below, (ver 8640, 8814,) as in Petiach the Marquis's sister is said to be married to the Count de Panico. In Boccaccio it is 'de Panago'

Ver 8614 'His message' His 'messenger' (See below, ver 8823) 'Message' was commonly used for 'messenger' by the French Poets (Du Cange, in v 'Messagarius')

Ver 8915 'As ye have do mo' For 'me' This is one of the most licentious corruptions of orthography that I remember to have observed in Chaucer All that can be said in excuse of him is, that the old poets of other countries have not been more scrupulous Quadrio has a long chapter (l n dist iv cap iv) upon the licences taken by the Italian poets, and especially Dante, the most licentious, as he says, of them all, 'for the sake of rhyme' As long a chapter might easily be filled with the irregularities which the old French poets committed for the same reason It should seem that, while orthography was so variable,

as it was in all the living European languages before the invention of printing, the poets thought it generally advisable to sacrifice propriety of spelling to exactness of rhyming. Of the former offence there were but few judges, the latter was obvious to the eye of every reader.

Ver 9064 'Lest Chichevache' This excellent reading is restored upon the authority of the best MSS, instead of the common one, 'Chechifache'. The allusion is to the subject of an old ballad, which is still preserved in MS Harl (2251, fol 270, b). It is a kind of pageant, in which two beasts are introduced, called 'Bycokne' and 'Chichevache'. The first is supposed to feed upon obedient husbands, and the other upon patient wives, and the humour of the piece consists in representing Bycokne as pampered with a superfluity of food, and Chichevache as half starved.

In Stowe's Catalogue of Lydgate's Works, at the end of Speght's Edit of Chaucer, there is one entitled 'Of two monstrous beasts Bycokne and Chichefache'. It is not improbable that Lydgate translated the ballad now extant from some older French poem, to which Chaucer alludes. The name of Chichevache is French, 'Vacca parca'.

Ver 9080 'Aventail' 'The forepart of the armour' (Sk). He deduces it from 'avant'. But 'ventaille' was the common name for that aperture in a close helmet through which the wearer was to breathe (Nicot, in v), so that perhaps 'aventaille' meant originally an helmet with such an aperture, 'un heaume à ventaille'.

Ver 9088 'And wying and wail'. Besides the MSS C 1, Ask 1, 2, and others, we have the authority of both Caxton's Edit for concluding the Clerk's Tale in this manner. I say nothing of the two Edit by Pynson, as they are mere copies of Caxton's second. But I must not conceal a circumstance which seems to contradict the supposition that the Merchant's Prologue followed immediately. In those same MSS the following stanza is interposed —

'This worthy Clerk whan ended was his tale,
Our Hosto saide and swore by cockes bones,
Me were lever than a barrel of ale

My wif at home had heigl this legend ones,
 This is a gentil tale for the nones,
 As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille
 But thing that wol not be, let it be stille'

Whatever may be thought of the genuineness of these lines, they can at best, in my opinion, be considered as a fragment of an unfinished prologue, which Chaucer might once have intended to place at the end of the Clerk's Tale. When he determined to connect that tale with the Merchant's in another manner, he may be supposed, notwithstanding, to have left this stanza for the present uncanceled in his MS. He has made use of the thought, and some of the lines, in the prologue which connects the Monk's Tale with 'Meliobœus' (ver 13895-13900)

The two additional stanzas, which were first printed in Ed. U11 from MS F, (H 1, in Uiry's List,) and which serve to introduce the Franklin's Tale next to the Clerk's, are evidently, I think, spurious. They are not found, as I recollect, in any MS except that cited by Mr Uiry and MS B. If these two MSS were of much greater age and authority than they really are, they would weigh but little in opposition to the number and character of those MSS in which these stanzas are wanting, and in which the Merchant's Tale stands next to the Clerk's.

Another proof of the spuriousness of these stanzas is, that they are almost entirely made up of lines taken from the prologue, which in this Edition, upon the authority of the best MSS, is prefixed to the Squire's Tale. (See below, ver 10301)

Ver 9172 'Ne take no wife' What follows, to ver 9180 inclusive, is taken from the 'Liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis,' as quoted by Hieronymus, ('Contra Iovinianum,') and from thence by John of Salisbury, ('Polycrat,' l viii c xi) — 'Quod si propter dispensationem domus, et languoris solatia, et fugam solitudinis, ducuntur uxores, multo melius dispensat servus fidelis,' &c. 'Assidere autem ægiotanti magis possunt amici et venulæ beneficis obligati quam illa, quæ nobis imputet lachrymas suas,' &c

Ver. 9180 'Many a day' After this verse, in the common Edit, are these two —

'And if thou take to thee a wife untrew
 Full oftentime it shall thee sore new'

In MSS A, C, and B *α*, they stand thus —

‘And if thou take a wif be wel ywar
Of on ^{peril} thing which I declare no dai’

In MSS C 1, HA, D, thus —

‘And if thou take a wif of heye lynage
She shal be hautoyne and of great costage.

In MS B *δ* thus —

‘And if thou take a wif in thin age olde
Ful lightly mayst thou be a cokewold’

In MSS Ask 1, 2, E, H, B *θ*, N C, and both Caxton's Editt, they are entirely omitted, and so I believe they should be. If any one of these couplets should be allowed to be from the hand of Chaucer, it can only be considered as the opening of a new argument, which the author, for some reason or other, immediately abandoned, and consequently would have cancelled, if he had lived to publish his work

Ver 9236 ‘Lo how that Jacob’ The same instances are quoted in ‘Melibœus’

Ver. 9250 ‘As saith Senec’ In Maug C 1 ‘Sicut nihil est superius benigna conjuge, ita nihil est crudelius infesta muliere’ (Seneca)

Ver 9251 ‘As Caton bit.’ *i* *e*, biddeth (See the note on ver. 187) The line referred to is quoted in Maug. C 1.—

‘Uxoris linguam, si fugi est, ferre memento’

It is m 1 in dist 25

Ver 9259. ‘If thou lovest thyself’ The allusion is to Ephes. v. 28 ‘He that loveth his wife, loveth himself’ The MSS read, ‘If thou lovest thyself, thou lovest thy wife,’ which, I think, is certainly wrong. I have printed, from conjecture only ‘love thou thy wife’ But upon reconsidering the passage, I think it may be brought still nearer to the apostle's doctrine by writing, ‘Thou lovest thyself, *if* thou lovest thy wife’

Ver 9298 ‘Wade's boat’ Upon this M¹ Speght remarks, as follows ‘Concerning Wade and his bote called Gungelot, as also his staunge exploits in the same, because the matter is long and fabulous, I passe it over’ ‘Tantamne rem tam neglegenter’ M¹ Speght probably did not foresee that posterity would

be as much obliged to him for a little of this 'fabulous matter' concerning 'Wade and his bote,' as for the gravest of his annotations. The story of Wade is mentioned again by our author in his 'Troilus' (in 615) —

'He songe, she playede, he tolde a tale of Wade'

It is there put proverbially for any romantic history; but the allusion in the present passage to 'Wade's boat' can hardly be explained, without a more particular knowledge of his adventures than we are now likely ever to attain

Ver 9348 'Disputison' Disputation So ver 11202, 15244
See Gower, ('Conf Am,' fol 15, b) —

'In great desputeson they were,'

and fol 150, b 151, b.

Ver. 9409 'A chidestei' So MS A. (See the note on ver 2019)

Ver 9410 'A man is wood.' In MS A, 'mannishewed,' in C 1, 'mannish wood'

Ver 9594 'Ne he Theodomas' This person is mentioned again as a famous trumpeter in the 'H of F,' in 156, but upon what authority I really do not know. I should suspect that our author met with him, and the anecdote alluded to, in some Romantic History of Thebes

'He' is prefixed to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon usage. See before, ver 9242, 'him Holofarnes,' ver. 9247, 'him Mardochee,' and below, ver. 9608,

'Of her Philology and him Mercury'

Ver 9652 'As that she bare it' As this line is not only in all the best MSS but also in Edit Ca 2, it seems very extraordinary that the later editions should have exchanged it for the following —

'So fresh she was and thereto so licand'

Ver. 9658 'His service bedeth' Proffereth. So this word is explained in another passage (ver 16533 —

'Lo, how this thief coulde his service bede'
Full sooth it is, that such proffer'd service
Stinketh, as witnessen these olde wise.'

See also ver. 8236.

Ver 9659 'False of holy hue' I have added 'of,' from conjecture See below, ver 12355, 'under hue of holiness'

Ver 9681 'Veinage' 'Veinaccia,' Ital. 'Credo sic dictum,' says Skinner, 'quasi Veronaccia, ab agro Veronensi in quo optimum ex hoc genere vinum crescit' But the veinage, whatever may have been the reason of its name, was probably a wine of Ciete, or of the neighbouring continent Floiss, v iv c 18 'De l'isle de Candie il leu venoit tres bonnes malvoisies et grenaches (1 gienaches) dont ils estoient largement servis et confortez' Our author, in another place, (ver 13001,) joins together the wines of 'Malvesie' and 'Veinage' Malvasia was a town upon the eastern coast of the Morea, near the site of the ancient Epidaurus Lameia, within a small distance from Ciete

Ver 9684 'Dan Constantine' 'Dan,' a corruption of 'Dominus,' was a title of honour usually given to monks, as Dom and Don still are in France and Spain See below, ver 13935 —

'Whether shall I call you my lord Dan John,
Or Dan Thomas, or elles Dan Albon?'

Dan Constantine, according to Fabric, ('Bibl. Med. Aet,' t 1 p. 423, Ed. Pat 4to,) wrote about the year 1080 His works, including the treatise mentioned in the text, were printed at Basil, 1536, fol

Ver 9690 'And they have done' This line has also been left out of the later Edit, though it is in all the best MSS. and in Edit Ca 2 To supply its place the following line—

'So hasted January it must be done'—

has been inserted after ver 9691, and the four lines have been made to rhyme together by adding 'sone' at the end of ver 9689 —

'Let varden all this house in courteous wise sone'

Ver 9714 'Ne hurt himselven' In the Pauson's Tale we have a contrary doctrine 'God wot, a man may slay himself with his own knife, and make himself drunken of his own tun'

Ver 9761. 'In ten of Taue.' The greatest number of MSS read 'two,' 'tuo,' 'too,' or 'to' But the time given ('four days complete,' ver. 9767,) is not sufficient for the moon to pass from

the 2d degree of Taurus into Cancer. The mean daily motion of the moon being = $13^{\circ} 10' 35''$, her motion in four days is = $1^{\circ} 22' 42''$, or not quite 53 degrees, so that, supposing her to set out from the 2d of Taurus, she would not, in that time, be advanced beyond the 25th degree of Gemini. If she set out from the 10th degree of Taurus, as I have collected the text, she might properly enough be said, in four days, to be 'gliden into' Cancer.

Ver 9888 'A dog for the bow' A dog used in shooting (See before, ver 6951)

Ver 9967 'So burningly' Vulg 'benignly' MSS Ask 1, 2, read 'fervently,' which is probably a gloss for the true word, 'brunningly' (See before, ver 1566) MS A reads 'benyngly'

Ver 9983 'For as good is' The reading in the text is from MS Ask 1 MS A reads thus —

'For as good is al blind deceived be'

I should not dislike—

'For as good is al blind deceived to be,
As be deceived, whan a man may see'

Ver 10000 'What sleight is it.' These lines are a little different in MSS C 1, HA —

'What sleight is it, though it be long and hot,
That love n'il find it out in some mannere''

Ver 10104 'Which that he ravished out of Ethna' So MS A In some other MSS, 'Ethna,' by a manifest error of the copyist, has been changed into 'Pioseipina' The passage being thus made nonsense, other transcribers left out the line, and substituted this in its stead —

'Each after other right as ony line'

Ver 10121 'Among a thousand' Ecclesiastes vii 28 This argument is treated in much the same manner in 'Melibæus.'

Ver 10158 'The Roman gestes' He means the collection of stories called 'Gesta Romanorum,' of which I once thought to say a few words here, in order to recommend it to a little more attention than it has hitherto met with from those who have

written upon the poetical inventions of the Middle Ages, but as many of the stories in that collection are taken from a treatise of Petrus Alphonsus, 'De Clericali disciplina,' an older and still more forgotten work, I shall reserve what I have to offer upon this subject till I come to the 'Tale of Melibœus,' where 'Piers Alphonse' is quoted

Ver 10227 'Gan pullen' After this verse, the Editt (except Ca 2, and Pyns 1, 2,) have eight others of the lowest and most superfluous baldry that can well be conceived. It would be a mere loss of time to argue from the lines themselves, that they were not written by Chaucer, as we have this short and decisive reason for rejecting them, that they are not found in any one MS of authority. They are not found in MSS A, C 1, Ask 1, 2, HA, B, C, D, G, Bod α β γ δ ϵ ζ , C 2, T, N Ch. In MSS E, H, I, W, either the whole tale, or that part where they might be looked for, is wanting. The only tolerable MS in which I have seen them is F, and there they have been added in the margin, by a later hand, perhaps not older than Caxton's first edition.

Ver 10240 'Out' help'' Two lines, which follow this in the common Editt, are omitted for the reasons stated in the note upon ver. 10227. And I shall take the same liberty, upon exactly the same grounds, with four more, which have been inserted in those Editt after ver 10250.

Ver 10241 'O stronge lady stoe' As all the best MSS support this reading, I have not departed from it, for fear 'stoe' should have some signification that I am not aware of. Some MSS have 'stowie,' MS. G, 'home,' Editt. Ca 2, 'hoie' 'Hóra, meietur,' Iceland

Ver 10261 'Ye mase, ye masen' The final 'n' has been added without authority, and unnecessarily. This line is very oddly written in MSS. Ask 1, 2 —

'Ya may ya may ya, quod she'

Ver 10293 It has been said in the 'Discourse,' &c, § XXIII, that this new Prologue has been prefixed to the Squere's Tale upon the authority of the best MSS. They are as follows — A., C. 1, Ask 1, 2, HA, D., Bod α γ δ . The concurrence of

the first five MSS would alone have been more than sufficient to outweigh the authorities in favour of the other prologue. Edit Ca 2 (though it has not this prologue) agrees with these MSS in placing the Squire's Tale *after* the Merchant's.

Ver. 10298 'Weve' This verb is generally used transitively, to 'wave,' to 'relinquish' a thing. But it has also a neuter signification, to 'depart,' as here. (See also vers 4728, 9357)

Ver. 10312 'Since women connen uttei' MS A reads, 'oute,' but others have 'uttei,' which I believe is right, though I confess that I do not clearly understand the passage. The phrase has occurred before (ver. 6103) —

'With danger uttren we all our chaffaie'

Ver. 10344 'Of which the eldest son' I have added 'son,' for the sake of the metre.

Ver. 10364 'And in his mansion' 'His' refers to Mais, and not to the Sun. 'Aries est l'exaltation du Soleil ou xix degre et si est Aries maison de Mais.' ('Calend des Berg,' Sign I ult.) Leo was the mansion of the Sun. (Ibid, Sig K 1) Aries is there also said to be 'signe chault et sec'

Ver. 10381 'Strange sewes' A sewer was an officer so called from his placing the dishes upon the table. 'Asseoun,' Fl, from 'asseoun,' to place. In the establishment of the king's household there are still four Gentlemen Sewers. 'Sewes' here seem to signify 'dishes,' from the same original, as 'assiette,' in Fr, still signifies a 'little dish,' or 'plate'. See Gower, 'Conf. Am,' fol 115, b —

'The fleshe, whan it was so to-hewe,
She taketh, and maketh ther of a sewe'

Ver. 10382 'Heionsewes' 'Heionceaux,' Fl, according to the Glossary. At the Institution of Aichbp Nevil, 6 Edward IV, there were 'Heionshawes iii C' (Lel 'Collect,' vol vi. 2.) At another feast, in 1530, we read of '16 Heionsews, every one 12d.' (Peck's 'D C.,' vol. ii. 12)

Ver. 10509. 'A gentle Poules couser' A horse of Apulia, which in old Fr. was usually called 'Pouille.' The horses of that country were much esteemed (MS. Bod, James VI, 142) Richard, Aichbp of Armagh, in the fourteenth century, says in

praise of our St Thomas 'Quod nec mulus Hispaniæ, nec dextrarius Apuliæ, nec repedo Æthiopix, nec elephantis Asiæ, nec camelus Syriæ hoc asino nostro Angliæ aptior sive audentior invenitur ad prælia' He had before informed his audience, that 'Thomas, Anglice, idem est quod Thom Asinus' There is a patent in Rymer, 2 E II, 'De dextrarius in Lombardia emendis'

Ver 10523 'The Greek's horse Sinon' This is rather an awkward expression for 'the horse of Sinon the Greek,' or, as we might say, 'Sinon the Greek's horse'

Ver 10546 'Alhazen and Vitellon' 'Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticæ' are extant, printed at Basil, 1572 The first is supposed by his editor to have lived about A D 1100, and the second to A D 1270

Ver 10561 'Canacees' This word should perhaps have had an accent on the first 'e'—Canacées—to shew that it is to be pronounced as of four syllables So also below (ver 10945)—

'And swouneth eft in Canacées barme'

Ver 10570 'Yknownen it so feine' 'Known it so before' I take 'feine' to be a corruption of 'foine' ('foian,' Sax) So in 'Tio,' v 1176, 'feine yeie' seems to signify 'former years' In 'P P.' fol lxxx b, 'feine ago' is used as 'long ago'

Ver 10583 'Chamber of paiements' 'Chambre de paiement' is translated, by Cotgrave, the presence-chamber, and 'Lit de paiement,' a bed of state. 'Paiements' originally signified all sorts of ornamental furniture, or clothes, from 'payer,' Fl, 'to adorn.' See ver. 2503, and 'Leg of G W., Dido,' ver 181 —

'To dauncing chambres, ful of paiementes,
Of riche beddes and of pavementes
This Eneas is ledde after the mete'

The Italians have the same expression ('Ist d Conc Trident,' l iii) —'Il Pontefice—ritornato alla camera de' paramenti co' Cardinali'

Ver 10587. 'In the Fish.' See the note on ver 6284

Ver 10660 'Till that well nigh' 'That' has been added for the sake of the metre. We might read with some MSS.—

'Till well nigh the day began for to spring'

Ver. 10663 'That muchel drink and labour' So MSS C 1, HA In MS A it is 'That murther and labour,' in Ask 1, 2, 'That after moche labour,' in several other MSS and Editt Ca 1, 2, 'That moche mete and labour' We must search further, I apprehend, for the true reading

Ver. 10666 'Blood in domination' 'V. Lib Galeno adscr de natua,' &c, Ed Chaucer T. V, p 327 'Sanguis dominatus houis septem ab hora noctis nona ad horam diei tertiam'

Ver. 10742. 'A falcon peregrine' This species of falcon is thus described in the 'Trésor de Brunet Latin,' P 1 Ch Des Faucons (MS Reg 19, C X) 'La seconde lignie est faucons, que hom apele peleins, par ce que nus ne tirove son n' ains est plus autresi come en peleinage. et est mult legiers a noier, et mult cortois, et vaillans, et de bone maniere' Chaucer adds, that this falcon was of 'fiemde,' or 'fiemed, lond,' from a 'foreign country'

Ver. 10749 'Leden' 'Language,' Sax, a corruption of 'Latin' Dante uses 'Latino' in the same sense (Canz 1) —

'E cantine gli augelli
Ciascuno in suo latino'

Ver. 10840. 'Crowned malice' The reader of taste will not be displeased, I trust, at my having received this reading upon the authority of MS A only. The common reading is 'cruel.'

Ver. 10921 'Thulke text' Boethius, l iii met 2. —

'Repetunt proprios quæque recursus,
Redituque suo singula gaudent,'

which our author has thus translated 'All thynges seken ayen to hu propre couse, and all thynges rejoysen on hu retournenge agayne to hu natue' The comparison of the bud is taken from the same place

Ver. 10958 'Velouettes blue' 'Velvets,' from the Fl 'Velou,' 'Velouette' See Du Cange, in v 'Villosa, Velluetum' See Samtié, t iii. p 664

I will just add, that as 'blue' was the colour of 'truth,' (see CL. 248,) so 'green' belonged to 'inconstancy.' Hence in a 'Ballade upon an inconstant lady,' (among Stowe's Additions to Chaucer's Works, p 551, Ed Ury,) the burden is —

'Instede of blew thus may ye were al grene'

Ver 10962 'These tidifes' The 'tidife' is mentioned as an inconstant bud in the 'Leg of G W,' ver 154 —

'As doth the tidif for newofangelnesse'

Skinner supposes it to be the 'titmouse,' but he produces no authority for his supposition, nor have I any to oppose to it

Ver 10963, 10964, are transposed from the order in which they stand in all the Editt and MSS that I have seen Some of the best MSS however read 'And pics,' which rather countenances the transposition My only excuse for such a liberty must be, that I cannot make any good sense of them in the common order

Ver 10977, 10978, are also transposed, but upon the authority of MSS A, C 1, and, I believe, some others, though, being satisfied of the certainty of the emendation, I have omitted to take a note of their concurrence Ed. Ca 2 agrees with those MSS According to the common arrangement, old Cambuscan is to 'win Theodora to his wife,' and we are not told what is to be the object of Algarsif's adventures

Ver. 10981 'Of Camballo' MS A reads 'Caballo' But that is not my only reason for suspecting a mistake in this name It seems clear from the context, that the person here intended is not 'a brother,' but 'a lover,' of Canace—

'Who fought in listes with the brethren two

For Canace, or that he might here winne'

'The brethren two' are, obviously, the two brethren of Canace, who have been mentioned above, Algarsif and Camballo In MSS Ask 1, 2, it is, 'his brethren two,' which would put the matter out of all doubt. Camballo could not fight with himself

Again, if this Camballo be supposed to be the brother of Canace, and to fight in defence of her with some two brethren, who might be suitors to her, according to Spenser's fiction, he could not properly be said to 'winne' his sister, when he only prevented others from winning her.

The outline therefore of the unfinished part of this tale, according to my idea, is nearly this, the conclusion of the story of the 'Falcon,'

'By mediation of Camballus,'

with the help of the Ring, the conquests of Cambuscan, the winning of Theodora by Algarsif, with the assistance of the Hoise of Biass, and the marriage of Canace to some knight, who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren—a method of courtship very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry

Ver 10984 'And there I left' After this verse, in MS. C 1, and others, is the following note 'Here endeth the Squire's tale as meche as Chaucei made.' The two lines, which in the Editte and some MSS are made to begin a third part, are wanting in all the best MSS —

'Apollo whyleth up his chare so he
Til that the god Mercurius house the she'

They certainly have not the least appearance of belonging to this place. I should guess that they were originally scribbled by some vacant reader in the blank space, which is commonly left at the end of this tale, and afterwards transcribed, as Chaucer's, by some copyist of more diligence than sagacity.

Ver 10985 'In faith, Squier' The authorities for giving this prologue to the Franklin, and for placing his tale next to the Squire's, are MSS A, Ask 1, 2, HA, Bod a γ In MS C. 1, there is a blank of near two pages at the end of the Squire's Tale, but the Franklin's Tale follows, beginning at ver 11066 This arrangement is also supported by Ed Ca 2 For the rest, see the 'Discourse,' &c., § XXV

Ver 11021 'These olde gentle Bretons' Of the collection of 'British Lays,' by Marie, something has been said in the 'Discourse,' &c, p cxxvii, note I will here only quote a few passages from that collection, to shew how exactly Chaucer and she agree in their manner of speaking of the Aimerican bards The Lay of 'Elidus' concludes thus (MS Hail, 978, fol 181) —

'De l'aventure de ces treis
Li auntien Bretun curteis
Firent li lai pur remembrer,
Que hum nel deust pas oblier'

The Lay of 'Guigemar' thus (fol 146) —

'De cest cunte, ke oi avez,
Fu Guigemar le lai trovez,

*Q'hum fait en harpe e en rote,
Dont est a ou la note'*

The Lay of 'Cheviefoil' begins (fol 171) —

*'Asez me plect, o bien lo voil,
Du lai qe hum nune cheviefoil
Q'la verite vus encunt,
Pui quoi il fu fet e dunt
Plusuis le me unt cunte e dit,
E jeo l'ai trove en escrit,
De Tristram e de la roine,
De lui amur qui tant fu fine,
Dunt il eurent mente dolui,
Puis muurent en un jui'*

In one particular Chaucer goes further, as I remember, than Maue, when he says, that these Lays were

'Rimeyed in hu firste Breton tonge,'

if 'rimeyed' be understood to mean 'written in rhyme' But it may very well signify only 'versified' Indeed, the Editor of the 'Dictionnaire de la Langue Bretonne,' by Dom Pelletier, seems to doubt whether the Aimonian language be capable of any sort of poetical harmony 'Nous ne voyons pas que nos Bretons Aimonians ayent cultivée la poesie, et la langue telle qu'ils la parlent, ne paroît pas pouvoir se plier à la mesure, à la douceur et à la harmonie des vers' (Pref, p 1x) A strange doubt in him, who might have found in the Dictionary which he has published, quotations from two Aimonian poems, viz, 'Les Prophetes de Gwinglaff,' and 'La Destruction de Jerusalem,' both in rhyme (See 'Aiabat Bagat') And he himself speaks in the same preface (p viii) of 'la vie de S Gwenolé, premier Abbé de Landevenec, écrite en vers' The oldest MS, however, now known in the language, according to his account, is that containing 'Les Prophetes de Gwinglaff,' written in 1450.

Ver 11113. 'Not fai from Penmark' The best MSS have blundered in this name They write it 'Pedmark' But MSS. Bod a, e, and Ed. Ca 2, have it right—'Penmark' The later Editrs have changed it ridiculously enough into 'Denmark'

Penmark is placed in the maps upon the western coast of Bretagne, between Brest and Port L'Orient. Walsingham men-

tions a descent of the English in 1403, 'apud Penaich,' (1 Penmarch,) p 369. (See Lobineau, 'H de Biet,' t 1 p 503) In the same history, 'de Penmaic' occurs very frequently as a family-name. The etymology of the word, from 'Pen' (caput, mons) and 'Maik' (limes, regio), is evidently British.

Ver 11120 'Canuud' This word is also of British original, signifying 'the Red city,' as 'Can guent,' in this island, signified 'the white city.' Arvnagus is a known British name from the time of Juvenal.

Ver 11127 'Doigen' 'Dioguen,' or 'Doiguen,' was the name of the wife of Alain I (Lobineau, t 1 p 70, see also the index to t 11)

Ver 11250 'Auelius' This name, though of Roman original, was common, we may presume, among the Britons. One of the princes mentioned by Gildas was called Auelius Conanus. Another British king is named Auelius Ambrosius by Geoffrey of Monmouth. It may be remarked of this last author, that although he has not paid the least regard to truth in his narration of facts, he has been very attentive to probability in his names both of persons and places.

Ver 11262 'As doth a funie in hell' It is 'a fire,' in MSS C 1, Ask 1, 2, HA, which, perhaps, ought to have been followed though I cannot say that I well understand either of the readings 'Fuy' and 'fuy' have been confounded before (ver 2686)

Ver 11317 'Is there none other grace' I have inserted these two lines in this place upon the authority of MS A, supported by MSS E, Bod θ. They have usually been placed after ver 11310.

Ver 11422 'Pamphilus for Galathee' Mr Urry, misled by his classical learning, has altered this most licentiously—

'Than Polyphemus did for Galathee'

But the allusion is plainly to the first lines of a Latin poem, which was very popular in the time of Chaucer, in which one Pamphilus gives a history of his amour with Galatea.

The poem begins thus (MS Cotton Titus A xx) —

'Liber Pamphili

*Vulneror et clausum porto sub pectore telum,
Crescit et assidue plaga dolorque mihi*

Et fermentis adhuc non audeo dicere nomen,
Nec sunt aspectus plaga videre suos'

This poem, by the name of 'Pamphilus,' is quoted in our author's 'Melibœus' It is extant in MS in many libraries, and it has also been printed more than once (Leyser, 'Hist Poet Medi Ævi,' p 2071 (1171), Catal Gaignat, n 2233, 2234)

Ver 11453 'Tiegetoures' The profession of a 'joculator,' or 'juggler,' was anciently very comprehensive, as appears from this passage of the 'Breviari d' Amois' (See the 'Discourse,' &c, page cxxix, note) —

'Altiessi peccan li joglai,
Que ssabo cantar o balar,
E ssabo tocai estumens,
O ssabon encantar las gens,
O ffar autia joglayria'

In the time of Chaucer, the persons who exercised the first-mentioned branches of the art were called, generally, 'minstrels,' and the name of 'jogelou' was, in a manner, appropriated to those who, by sleight of hand and machines, produced such illusions of the senses as are usually supposed to be effected by enchantment (See above, ver 7049) This species of 'jogelou' is here called a 'tiegetou' They are joined together in company with magicians. ('II of F,' iii 169)

'Thei saw I playing jogelours,
Magiciens and tiegetours,
And phitonesses, charmoresses—
And clerkes eke which come wel
All this magike naturell'—

See also the following ver. 187-191

If we compare the feats of the 'tiegetours,' as described in this passage, with those which are afterwards performed by the Clerk's 'magike,' for the entertainment of his guests, (ver 11501-11519,) we shall find them very similar, and they may both be illustrated by the following account which Sir John Mandeville has given of the exhibitions before the 'Giete Chan' 'And than comen jogelours and enchantours, that don many marvaylles for they maken to come in the ay the Sonne and the Mone, be seminge, to every mannes sight And after they

maken the nyght so deik, that no man may see no thing And aftre they maken the day to comē ayen fair and plesant with bright Sonne to every mannes sight And than they bungen in daunces of the fairest damyselles of the world and richest arrayed And aftre they maken to comen in othei damyselles, bringinge coupes of gold, fulle of mylk of dyverse bestes, and yeven drynke to lordes and to ladyes And than they make knyghtes to jousten in aimes fulle lustyly, and they rennen togidre a gret randoum, and they flusschen togidre tulle fiercely, and they breken here speeres so rudely, that the tronchouns fien in spiotes and peces alle aboute the halle And than they make to come in huntyng for the heit and for the booi, with houndes renning with open mouthe And many othei thinges they don be craft of hir enchauntementes, that it is marveyle for to see And suche playes of despoit they make, til the taking up of the booides' ('Mand Trav,' pp 285, 286) See also p 261 'And wher it be by craft or by nygiomancye, I wot nere'

The Glossary derives 'tregetou' from the Barb Lat, 'tricator,' but the derivatives of that family are 'tricheur,' 'trichene,' 'trick,' &c Nor can I find the word 'tregetou' in any language but our own It seems clearly to be formed from 'tieget,' which is frequently used by Chaucer for 'deceit,' 'imposture' ('R R,' 6267, 6312, 6825), and so is 'tiegety' (ibid., 6374, 6382) From whence 'tieget' itself may have been derived is more difficult to say, but I observe that 'trebuchet,' the French name for a military engine, is called by Chaucer, 'tiepeget' ('R R,' 6279), and by Knighton (2672), 'tiepget,' and that this same word, 'trebuchet,' in French, signified also a machine 'for catching birds' Du Cange, in v. 'Tiepget' 'Hinc appellatio mansit apud nos instrumentis, aut machinulis, suspensis et lapsilibus, ad captandas aviculas. Has enim etiamnum trebuchets appellamus' Muratori, in his 'Antiq Med Æ,' Diss xxvi p 473, informs us that 'tiabocchello,' or 'tiabocchetto,' in Italian, (which he explains to be the same as 'trebuchet' in French,) signified also another instrument of fraud, which he describes thus 'Sæculis Italæ turbatissimis—in usu fuere teterrima insidiarum loca, id est, in cubiculis pavementum perforatum, ac lineâ tabulâ (Ribalta appellabant) ita caute coopertum, ut qui,

improvidē alteram tabulā partē pedibus premēt, cedente ipsa in ima iueiet' This was clearly a species of trap-door. The reader will judge whether the 'tiegetou' may not possibly have been so called from his frequent use of these insidious machines in his operations.

That a great deal of machinery was requisite to produce the 'apparences,' or illusions, enumerated by Chaucer in this passage, is very certain but not long after the art of a 'tiegetou' seems to have been reduced to that of a modern 'juggler,' mere sleight of hand. In Lydgate's translation of 'The Dance of Macabre' (MS. Harl., 116), he has introduced a 'tiegitou' speaking thus —

'What may availe mankynde [if magike] naturale,
Or any craft shewed by apparence,
Or course of sterres above celestiale,
Or of heven all the influence,
Ayenst deth to stand at defence?
Laggarde de mayne now helpith me right nought
Farewell my craft and all such sapience,
For deth hath more maistries than I have wrought'

He has also the following speech of Death to a famous 'tiegitou' —

'Maister John Rykell, somtyme tiegitou
Of noble Henry kinge of Engleclond,
And of France the mighty conquerour,
For all the sleighes and turnyng of thyne honde,
Thou must come nere this dance to understonde
Nought may avail all thy conclusions
For deth shortly, nother on see nor longe,
Is not dysceyved by noon illusions'

Ver. 11567 'And nowel crieth' 'Noel,' in French, is derived from 'natales,' and signified originally a cry of joy at Christmas, 'le jour natal de nostre Seigneur.' (Menage in v. 'Noel') It was afterwards the usual cry of the people upon all occasions of joy and festivity 'Hist de Charles VII,' par Chastelier, p. 3, at the proclamation of Henry VI, 'fut crié sur la fosse de son pere à haute voix, Vive le Roy Henry, Roy de France et d'Angleterre, et avec cela fut crié "Noel," des assistans, confortans lesdits Anglois'

Ver. 11585 'His tables Toletanes' The Astronomical Tables,

composed by order of Alphonso X, king of Castille, about the middle of the thirteenth century, were called sometimes 'Tabulæ Toletanæ,' from their being adapted to the city of Toledo. There is a very elegant copy of them in MS Harl., 3647. I am not sufficiently skilled in the ancient astronomy to add anything to the explanation of the following technical terms, drawn chiefly from those tables, which has been given in the Addit. to Gloss, U11, v 'Expans yeres,' p 81.

Ver 11679 'Thise stoures bere witnesse' They are all taken from Hieronymus 'Contia Jovinianum,' l 1 c 39.

Ver 11766 'To alle wives' After this verse, the two following are found in several MSS —

'The same thing I say of Biha,
Of Rhodogone and of Valeria,'

but as they are wanting in MSS A C 1, Ask 1, 2, HA, I was not unwilling to leave them out.

Ver 11802 'She n'olde' After this verse Ed Ca 2 has the six following —

'Foraventure an hepe of you I wis
Will holden him a lewed man in this,
That he wold put his wife in jeopardy
Herkneth the tale, ei ye upon him crie
She may have better fortune than you semeth,
And whan that ye han heide the tale demeth.'

These lines are more in the style and manner of Chaucer than interpolations generally are, but as I do not remember to have found them in any MS, I could not receive them into the text. I think, too, that if they were written by him, he would probably, upon more mature consideration, have suppressed them, as unnecessarily anticipating the catastrophe of the tale.

Ver 11807 'As she was boun' 'Ready' This old word is restored from MSS A, Ask 1, 2 (See 'P L,' p 236, 291.)

Ver 11926 'Which was the most free' The same question is stated in the conclusion of Boccaccio's Tale ('Philoc., l v') — 'Dubitasi oia qual di costoro fusse maggior liberalità,' &c. The queen determines in favour of the husband.

Ver 11929 'Yea, let that passen' I have said all that I have to say in favour of this Prologue to the Doctor's Tale, in the

'Discouise,' &c, § XXVIII. It is only found in MS A. In MSS C 1, IIA, the following note is at the end of the Franklin's Tale 'Here endeth the Fi T and biginneth the Phisiciens tale without a Prologe'

Ver 11993 'Foi wine and youthe' The context, I think, requires that we should read—

'Foi wine and slouthe do Venus increase'

He is giving the reason why she avoided 'slogardie,' and did not permit Bacchus to have 'maistrie of hie mouth,' because 'wine and slouthe encresse the amorous inclinations, as oil and gresce do fine' I can make no sense of 'youthie,' or 'thoughtie,' as some MSS read

Ver 12051 'The Doctor' Over against this line, in the margin of MS C 1, is written 'Augustinus,' which means, I suppose, that this description of Envy is taken from S Austin. But I doubt whether Chaucer meant to quote that saint by the title of the Doctor. It rather seems to be an idle parenthesis like that ver 7269

Ver 12074 'A chui' So the best MSS, and Ed Ca 2. The common Editl have 'chient' In the 'Rom de la R,' where this story is told, (ver 5815-5894,) Claudius is called 'Seigent of Apprius' and accordingly Chaucer, a little lower, (ver. 12204,) calls him 'servant—unto—Apprius'

In the 'Discouise,' &c, § XXIX, I forgot to mention the 'Rom de la Rose' as one of the sources of this tale, though, upon examination, I find that our author has drawn more from thence than from either Gower or Livy

Ver. 12159 'Foi love' 'Rom de la R,' 5871 —

'Car par amour et sans haine
A sa belle fille Vigne
Tantost a la teste coupée,
Et puis au Juge présentée
Devant tous en plain Consistoire,
Et le Juge, selon l'hystorie,
Le commanda tantost à prendre'

(See below, v 12190-12193) The speeches of Virginius and his daughter are of Chaucer's own invention.

Ver 12190 See 'P L,' 18

Ver 12233 'Of bothe giftes.' This line is restored from MSS C 1, HA. It had been supplied in the common copies by the following —

'But hereof wol I not proceed as now'

Ver 12236 'A piteous tale' This is the reading of two good MSS, A and HA, but I believe it to be a gloss. The other copies read 'eimeful,' which is near the truth. It should be 'eimeful' 'Eaime,' Sax, signifies 'miser.' Hence, 'eaimelice,' 'miseiè' ('Ch. Sax,' 65), 'eaimthe,' 'miseia,' (Ibid, 141). And a little lower, (ver 12246,) 'to eime' is used for 'to grieve,' as the Sax 'eaimian' is, ('Ch. Sax,' 188, 14).

Ver 12239 'Thy jordanes' This word is in Walsingham (p. 288), 'duæ ollæ, quas Jordanes vocamus, ad ejus collum colligantur.' This is part of the punishment of a pretended 'phiscus et astiologus,' who had deceived the people by a false prediction. Hollinshed calls them 'two jorden pots' (p. 440).

Ver 12240 'Thine Hippocias' 'Ypocias,' or 'Hippocias,' and 'Galianes,' should both have been printed, as proper names, with great initial letters. (See the note on ver 433).

Ver 12245 'Said I not well?' All the best MSS agree in giving this phrase to the Host in this place. It must remind us of the similar phrase, 'Said I well?' which occurs so frequently in the mouth of Shakspeare's Host of the Garter; and may be sufficient, with the other circumstances of general resemblance, to make us believe that Shakspeare, when he drew that character, had not forgotten his Chaucer.

Ver 12279 'To saffion' So MS A, and Ed Ca 2. I have preferred it to the common reading 'savor,' as more expressive, and less likely to have been a gloss. Saffion was used to give colour as well as flavour.

The next lines are thus read in MSS C 1, Ask 1, 2, HA —

'In every village and in every town,
This is my teme, and shal and ever was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas
Than shew I forth,' &c

And perhaps I ought to have followed them

Ver 12297 'Fasting ydrunken' The prepositive particle 'y' has been added for the sake of the metre

Ver 12340 'Go a blake bened' So all the MSS, I think, except Ask 2, which reads, 'On blake be yed' Skinner explains 'blakebened' to mean 'in *ingras et inauspicatas domos missus*' I really cannot guess what it means

Ver 12341 'For certes' See 'R R,' ver 5763 —

'For oft gode predicacioun
Cometh of evil entencioun'

Ver 12409 'Them thought the Jewes' The same thought is repeated in the Parson's Tale

Ver 12411 'Tombesteies' Women-dancers, from the Sax 'tumban,' to dance He uses the word again in the 'Test of L,' b 2 The Editt read 'tomblesteies,' which is a later word, formed, like our tumble, from 'tumbelan,' the frequentative of 'tumban'

With respect to the termination in 'steie,' see the note on ver 2019, and in the next line 'fruitesteies' are to be understood to be female sellers of fruit

Ver 12417 'The holy writ' In marg C 1, 'Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria'

Ver 12426 'Seneca' Perhaps he refers to *Epist lxxxiii* 'Extende in plures dies illum ebrii habitum nunquid de fuore dubitabis? nunc quoque non est minor sed brevior'

Ver 12442 'For while that Adam' At this line, the margin of MS C 1, quotes Hieronym ('C Jovinian') 'Quam diu jejunavit Adam in Paradiso fuit Comedit et ejectus est Statim duxit uxorem'

Ver 12456 'Meat unto womb' In marg C 1., 'Esca ventii,' &c

Ver 12463 'The Apostle saith' Philippians iii 18

Ver 12468 'Stinking is thy cod' So MS C. Or we may read with MS B 8, 'O foule stinking cod'

Ver 12471 'To find' To supply So ver 14835 —

'She found herself and eke her daughters two'

See also 'P P,' fol lxxx —

'For a frend, that findeth him, faileth him never at node'

Ver. 12473 V D'Artigny, vol vi p 399.

Ver 12497 'The white wine of Lepe' According to the geo-

grapehais, Lepe was not far from Cadiz. This wine, of whatever sort it may have been, was probably much stronger than the Gascon wines, usually drunk in England. La Rochelle and Bourdeaux, (ver 12505,) the two chief ports of Gascony, were both, in Chaucer's time, part of the English dominions.

Spanish wines might also be more alluring upon account of their greater rarity. Among the Orders of the Royal Household, in 1604, is the following (MS. Harl., 293, fol. 162) 'And whereas, in tymes past, Spanish wines, called Sacke, were little or noe whit used in our couste, and that in later years, though not of ordinary allowance, it was thought convenient, that noblemen, &c, might have a boule or glass, &c, we understanding that it is now used as common drinke, &c, reduce the allowance to XII gallons a day for the court,' &c.

Ver 12520 'Readeth the Bible' Proverbs xxxi. 4

Ver 12537 'Stilbon' John of Salisbury, from whom our author probably took this story and the following, calls him 'Chilon' ('Polyciat,' l. 1, c. 5) 'Chilon Lacedæmonius, iungendæ societatis causâ missus Corinthum, duces et seniores populi ludentes invenit in aleâ. Infecto itaque negotio reversus est,' &c. Accordingly, in ver 12539, MS. C. 1 reads, very rightly, 'Lacedomye' instead of 'Calidone,' the common reading. Our author has used before 'Lacedomie' for 'Lacedæmon,' (ver. 11692.)

Ver 12542 'Yplaying atte hazard' I have added the prepositive 'y' for the sake of the metre. 'Atte' is a dissyllable. It was originally 'atten,' and is so used by 'R. G.' (pp. 379, 431). It has been frequently corrupted into 'at the,' but in Chaucer it may, and I think should, almost everywhere be restored. See ver 125, 3934, 4303, where some MSS. have preserved the true readings—'atte Bowe,' 'atte full.'

Ver 12585 'His nails' *re*, with which He was nailed to the Cross. Sir J. Mandeville (c. vii) 'And thereby in the walle is the place where the 4 Nayles of our Lord weren hidd, for he had 2 in his hondes and 2 in his feet. and of one of theise the Emperour of Costantynoble made a bydille to his hois, to bere him in bataylle, and though vertue thereof he overcame his enemies,' &c. He had said before (c. ii), that 'on of the nayles

that Crist was naylled with on the cross,' was at 'Constantynoble,' and 'on in Fiance, in the Kinges chapelle'

Ver 12586 'The blood—in Hailes' The Abbey of Hailes, in Gloucestershire, was founded by Richard, King of the Romans, brother to Henry III. This precious relic, which was afterwards commonly called 'the blood of Hailes' was brought out of Germany by the son of Richard, Edmund, who bestowed a third part of it upon his father's abbey of Hailes, and some time after gave the other two parts to an abbey of his own foundation at Ashing, near Berkhamstead (Hollmsh, v. ii p. 275)

Ver 12590 'The bicchel bones two' The common reading is 'thilke bones' The alteration which I have ventured to make is not authorised entirely by any MS, but in part by several MS. A reads 'biche^t,' C 1, 'the becched,' HA and H, 'the becched,' C, B θ, N. C, Ed Ca 1, 'the bicchid,' B a, 'the bicche,' Ed Ca 2, 'the bitched' 'Bickel,' as explained by Kilian, is 'Talus, ovillus et lusorius,' and 'Bickelen,' 'talus ludere' See also 'Had Junii Nomencl,' n. 213. Our dice, indeed, are the ancient 'tesserae' (κυβοι), not 'tali' (ἀστραγαλοι), but both being games of hazard, the implements of one might be easily attributed to the other. It should seem from Junius (loc. cit.) that the Germans had preserved the custom of playing with the natural bones, as they have different names for a game with 'tali ovilli,' and another with 'tali bubuli'

Ver 12601. 'Go bet' The same phrase is used in 'Leg. of G. W., Dido,' 288—

'The herd of hares founden is anon,
With hey, go bet, picke thou, let gon, let gon,'

where it seems to be a term of the chase

Ver 12885 'Saint Heleue;' Sir J. Mandeville (c. vii p. 93) 'And nyghe that awtiet is a place undir eithe, 42 degrees of depenesse, where the Holy Croys was founden, be the wytt of Seynte Elyne, undir a roche, where the Jewes had hidde it. And that was the veray croys assayed, for they founden 3 crosses, on of our Lord and 2 of the 2 theves and Seynte Elyne proved hem on a ded body, that aros from dethe to lyve, whan that it was leyd on it, that our Lord dyed on' (See also c. ii. p. 15)

Ver 12914 'I smell a lollei'. This is in character, as appears from a treatise of the time (Hail Catal, n 1666) 'Now in Engclond it is a comun protectioun ayens peiscutioun—if a man is customable to sweire nedeles and fals and unavisid, by the bones, nailes, and sides and othei membres of Crist—And to absteyne fro othes nedeles and unleful,—and reprieve sinne by way of charite, is mater and cause now, why Prelates and sum Loides sclaudien men, and clepen hem Lollardes, Eietikes,' &c

Ver 12919 'Said the Shipman'. So MS B δ , the *one* MS (as I have said in the 'Discourse,' &c, § XXXI) which countenances the giving of this prologue to the Shipman. In MSS C and D this passage is given to the Sompnour, but not by way of prologue to his tale. In C it is followed by the Wife of Bath's Prologue, and in D by the Prologue which in this edition is prefixed to the Squire's Tale.

When these diversities are considered, and also that the whole passage is wanting in the five best MSS, it may perhaps appear not improbable that these twenty-eight lines, though composed by Chaucer, had not been inserted by him in the body of his work, that they were therefore omitted in the first copies, and were afterwards injudiciously prefixed to the Squire's Tale, when the true prologue of that tale, as pointed above, was become unsuitable, by reason of the tale itself being removed out of its proper place.

Ver 12923 'Springen cockle'. This seems to shew that Chaucer considered 'Lollei' as derived from 'lolium,' but Du Cange, in v 'Lollardus,' rather supposes that 'Lollard' was a word of German origin, signifying 'mussitator,' a 'mumbler' of prayers. (See also Kilian, in v 'Lollaerd').

Ver 12942 'He must us clothe'. In Ed. U₁ it is 'them,' but all the MSS that I have seen read 'us' which would lead one to suspect that this tale was originally intended for a female character.

Ver 13000. 'Malvesie'. See the note on ver 9681.

Ver 13027 'Under the yerd'. This was properly said of children. MS Bod, Jun 66, 'Monachicum Colloquium,' Sax Lat, p. 15 —

- 'Mag *Quid manducas in die?*
 Ifwæt yst þu on dæg?
 'Dis *Adhuc carnibus vescor,*
 Gyt flæscmetum ic bruce,
gum puer sum
 Forþam cild ic com
 sub vngi *degens*
 under gyda dlohtmende.'

See before, vei 7898

Vei 13061 'On my Portos' *i.e.*, Breviary Du Cange, in v 'Portiforium' 'Portuasses' are mentioned among other prohibited books in the Stat 3 and 4 E VI, c. 10 And in the Parliament-roll of 7 E. IV, n 40, there is a petition, that the robbing of 'Porteous, Grayell, Manuell,' &c, should be made felony without clergy, to which the King answered, 'Le Roy s'aviseia'

Vei 13246 'Haven hei' The final 'n' in 'haven' has been added for the sake of the metrie, but unnecessarily, as the 'e' feminine may be pronounced before 'h,' as before a consonant (See the note on vei 300)

Vei. 13368 'A thousand last quad year' 'Last,' in Teut, is 'onus,' 'saicina' (Kilian), and 'quaed' in the same language is 'malus' The meaning, therefore, is, 'God give the monke a thousand last (ever so great a weight) of quad yere (bad years, misfortune)' The Italians use 'mal anno' in the same sense.

Vei 13383 'O Loid, ou Loid' The Prioress begins her legend with the first verses of the 8th Psalm, 'Domine, Dominus noster,' &c

Vei 13401 'When he thine hearte light' *i.e.*, lighted, made light, or pleasant So in 'Tro,' b iii. 1088 —

'Whan wroth is he that shold my sorowes light'

Vei 13444 'Saint Nicholas' We have an account of the very early piety of this Saint in his Lesson, 'Biev Roman,' vi Decemb. 'Cujus viii sanctitas, quanta futura esset, jam ab incunabulis apparuit Nam infans, cum reliquas dies lac nutricis frequens sugeret, quatâ et sextâ feriâ (on Wednesdays and Fridays) semel duntaxat, idque vespere, sugobat'

Vei 13509 'Souded in virginity' or, according to the better MSS, 'souded to virginitee.' 'Souded' is from the Ir. 'souldó,'

and that from the Lat 'solidatus,' consolidated, fastened together. In Wycliffe's 'N T,' *Dedis in*, 'consolidatæ' is rendered 'sowdid'. The latter part of this stanza refers to Rev xiv 3, 4

Ver 13575 'I halse thee' MSS Ask 1, 2, read, 'I conjure thee,' but that seems to be a gloss. 'To halse' signifies properly 'to embrace round the neck,' from the Sax 'hals,' the neck. (See ver 10253) So in 'CL,' ver 1290 —

'I stand and speke and laugh and kisse and halse'

It signifies also 'to salute' ('P P,' fol xxii) —

'I halse hym hendlich, as I hys fiende were,'

and, fol xxxix, 'to salute with reverence' —

'And the eleven stoures halsed him all,'

which seems to be the sense here

Ver 13597 'Then will I fetchen thee' The best MSS read 'now,' which is scarce reconcilable to any rules of speech. Even with the correction which I have adopted, there is a greater confusion in this narration than I recollect to have observed in any other of Chaucer's stories

END OF VOL II.